





## Clerides expects firm U.N. action on Cyprus

Cyprus government accuses Turkey of trying to change island's demographic character

NICOSIA (AFP) — The United Nations Security Council will take its most important step yet next year to resolve the problem of the divided island of Cyprus, President Glafcos Clerides has said.

"It is the first time that the member countries of the Security Council are showing great interest in a solution to our national problem," Mr. Clerides said without elaborating in a new year message to Greek Cypriots living abroad.

The Security Council on Monday backed calls for "open-ended direct negotiations" next year between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish communities on Cyprus to secure a political settlement for the island.

It also called on the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities to cooperate to ensure that the "main elements of an overall settlement" could be clarified.

The Security Council vote came after British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said that Mr. Clerides and Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş both considered 1997 to be "a year of opportunity."

Cyprus has been divided since Turkish mainland troops invaded the northern third of the island in 1974 and set up a government unrecognised except by Ankara, after a right-wing

coup in Nicosia backed by the military junta then ruling Greece.

A U.N. peacekeeping force comprising 1,162 troops and 35 civilian police patrols the buffer zone which separates the two sides.

Monday's U.N. resolution also expressed concern about an arms build-up and incursions into the buffer zone in recent months.

Mr. Clerides, quoted by the Cypriot National News Agency, said the Greek Cypriot community would respond with courage, responsibility and flexibility to new efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem.

Next year will also see the start of talks between Nicosia and Brussels on Cyprus joining the European Union (EU), but Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan has warned that Northern Cyprus would be integrated into Turkey if EU membership were granted without Ankara's consent.

Cyprus meanwhile accused Turkey of trying to change the country's demographic character after Ankara announced a dramatic increase in population in the northern part of the island.

"If one takes into account that thousands of Turkish Cypriots emigrate, it is clear that the (Turkish) settlers are far more than the

indigenous Turkish Cypriots," government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides said.

He told the official news agency that "this systematic effort to alter the demographic character of the occupied area constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and of certain U.N. resolutions."

"It is a very serious development, and the Cyprus government will examine what further steps to take," Mr. Cassoulides said.

The population in the northern part of Cyprus is almost 200,000, according to provisional census figures, Turkey's Anatolia news agency announced on Thursday.

The census, carried out on Sunday, was the first since the Turkish invasion of the northern third of the island.

At 198,215, the population is almost double the figure of 104,000 Turkish Cypriots in 1960, when a treaty setting out the basis for an independent Cyprus was signed.

Anatolia gave no details about the number of people who settled in Northern Cyprus from Turkey after the 1974 invasion, which was in response to a right-wing coup in Nicosia aimed at uniting Cyprus with Greece.

The population in the Turkish part of Nicosia is 39,973, Anatolia said.



CELEBRATION: Iraqis attending a sports event in Baghdad celebrate President Saddam Hussein's son Uday's escape from an assassination attempt. Uday was wounded in the Dec. 12 attack in Baghdad and he appeared on television last week to announce he was recovering from the wounds in a Baghdad hospital (AFP photo)

## Britons charged with murder in Saudi Arabia seek lawyer

DUBAI (R) — The British embassy in Saudi Arabia is working to secure legal representation for two British nurses charged with murdering a colleague in the kingdom, the consul-general said on Saturday.

Deborah Kim Parry, 41, and Lucille McLaughlan, 31, have been charged with the murder of Australian nurse Yvonne Gilford, 55, at the King Fahd military medical complex in the eastern Saudi city of Dhahran.

If convicted they could be beheaded by the sword in public. "A family member" of the Gilford was quoted as saying in the British press last week that the family would not seek clemency for the two defendants.

Under Saudi law, the family of a murder victim could spare the convicted murderers from execution. "We are now discussing legal representation for them," consul-general William Patey told Reuters. "We have been in touch with the families and it is up to them to appoint a lawyer, but we will help facilitate that."

Lawyers are not allowed to represent defendants in Saudi courts, but diplomatic sources said the Islamic law in force in the kingdom entitled the suspects to an "agent."

"There appears to be nothing that says the agent cannot be a lawyer," one Gulf diplomat said. Mr. Patey said embassy officials had seen the women in prison on Christmas Eve, when they received confirmation of the charges.

Mr. Gilford's body was found in her room on Dec. 11. She had been stabbed four times, bludgeoned with a hammer and smothered.

The case almost caused a diplomatic crisis when Saudi officials at first refused requests by British diplomats to visit the women who have been in jail since Dec. 20.

"We are hoping to see them again on Monday and Tuesday. We are now in touch with the Saudi authorities to arrange another visit," the consul-general said.

Mr. Patey said the case documents were with the governor of Saudi Arabia's eastern province. It is up to his office to decide whether to refer the case to a Sharia court, dismiss it or seek deportation.

Human rights groups have expressed concern over the case, "because of their opposition to the death penalty and because the Saudi legal system does not allow defence lawyers."

Saudi Arabia has beheaded 68 people this year. Under Sharia law Saudi Arabia executes convicted murderers, drug smugglers, rapists and other criminals.

## UAE court rejects death sentence against Filipino

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) supreme court on Saturday rejected a death sentence passed by a lower court against a Filipino accused of murdering an Indian colleague.

But the supreme court said it would issue its sentence at another session on Jan. 18, when it will consider a translated letter from the relatives of the murdered Indian asking for the execution of John Aquino.

The relatives of the murdered man have provided the court with a letter in English seeking the execution of the Filipino, a court source said.

"The judge today asked for the letter to be translated into Arabic and it will be considered on Jan. 18," the source said.

Under Islamic law, the next of kin of a murdered person can ask for the death of the killer or accept blood money and save him from the gallows.

The source said the relatives of the murdered Indian insisted on Qisas, or the death penalty against Aquino. But the judge found that the letter bore no clear reference to the relatives and asked for an Arabic version.

"The judge asked for a legal expert in translation from the UAE justice ministry to prepare an Arabic version of that letter. It will be submitted during the next session," the source said.

The Filipino ambassador in the UAE, Roy Senares, was present in court but there was no immediate comment from the embassy on the verdict.

In Manila, Philippine Executive Secretary Ruben Torres was reported this week as saying he had instructed Mr. Senares to "exhaust all means to stop Aquino's execution."

He said the Philippine government would find a way to get clemency from UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan.

Aquino was sentenced to death in the northern emirate of Ajman for killing his Indian colleague during a drinking bout. His appeal against the sentence was rejected early this year.

## Egypt believes Ben Laden behind Islamabad attack

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian investigators believe the 1995 suicide bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan that killed 19 people was orchestrated by three militants and an exiled Saudi financier, a newspaper report says.

The Al-Ahram newspaper said in its Saturday edition that investigators have pinned blame on the leaders of the Jihad group, which seeks to replace Egypt's secular government with their version of Islamic rule and was responsible for the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat.

The newspaper said investigators determined the operation was funded by Osama Ben Laden, who was stripped of his Saudi citizenship in 1994 for opposing the government. Ben Laden is described by the U.S. State Department as a major sponsor of extremism.

A car packed with explosives tore through the embassy in Islamabad on Nov. 19, 1995. Among the dead were the two bombers in the car. Scores were arrested after the attack, and Pakistani police blamed so-called "Afghan Arabs," Arab men radicalised after going to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets in the 1980s.

The Egyptian interior ministry refused comment on the report.

The newspaper said investigators allege that three Jihad leaders, Ayman Al Zawahry, Tharwat Shehata and Adel Abdul Megid Abdul Bary, planned the bombing.

Zawahry, a medical doctor believed to live in Switzerland, is considered the philosophical leader of Jihad abroad. He was released from an Egyptian prison in 1985 after serving four years of a sentence for belonging to Jihad. He then left for Saudi Arabia, and went to Afghanistan.

Shehata is wanted for the attempted assassination of former Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sedki in 1995, and his whereabouts are unknown. Abdul Bary, a lawyer, was granted political asylum in England in 1992, according to the newspaper report.

The two Egyptians in the bomb-laden car were told they would escape unharmed but were killed by the explosion, the newspaper reported. Fingerprints taken from a hand found at the scene helped investigators identify one of them, the report said.

Altogether, 11 Jihad members and three Pakistanis were involved in the plot, the newspaper said.

## Lebanon releases human rights activist

BEIRUT (AP) — A human rights activist detained in a security crackdown was freed Friday, but more statements calling for revolt against the government and its Syrian backers were reported in Christian areas.

More than 60 Lebanese Christians have been arrested during the last 10 days after an armed attack on Syrian workers in Lebanon left one dead and seven injured. Most of those arrested support groups opposed to Syrian control of Lebanon.

Wael Kheir, executive director of the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights, was released Friday evening after having been picked up at his home Tuesday. No charges were filed against him.

Pierre Atallah, an editor at the respected independent daily Al Nahar, remained detained with nine others. They are being questioned about the attack on the Syrians and the distribution of the statements.

Syrian-backed Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has said security forces investigating the attack "were doing what is normally done by security forces elsewhere in the world."

Authorities have suggested that Israel was behind the campaign against the Syrians in Lebanon.

However, Christian clergymen denounced the arrests, many in nightly sweeps, and human rights groups said suspects were held at the defence ministry without formal charges. The military has set up roadblocks to search vehicles and check motorists' identification papers.

When more statements appeared Thursday night, including some posted on the walls of the courthouse in the Baabaa suburb, there was evidence that more people were being sought by authorities.

In one incident Friday, armed soldiers ringed a restaurant in another Christian suburb of the capital, apparently looking for a suspect. The restaurant was packed with children and adults holding a Christmas party, and soldiers tried to calm the crowd as terrified youngsters burst into tears, according to one witness who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Restaurant workers said afterwards that the troops had apparently made a mistake and left without making any arrests.

## Iran unilaterally frees 724 prisoners of war

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran handed over 724 prisoners of war to Iraq on Saturday to mark the anniversary of the birth of a Shiite Muslim leader and Christmas. Iranian state radio said.

The Iraqis, 24 of whom were Christians, were handed over to Iraqi authorities at the border town of Khanaqin in the presence of UN and Swiss representatives.

In Baghdad, the Iraqi government welcomed the prisoner release and said it "hopes it will pave the way for the release of all Iraqis held in Iran and their return to their families."

Iran on Thursday celebrated the anniversary of the birth of the 12th and last Shiite Imam Mehdi, who is believed by Shites to have appeared in the ninth century and is expected to return to establish world justice.

Iran last freed Iraqi prisoners from the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war in October, when around 150 were turned over to the Iraqi authorities.

The issue of POWs and missing in action has been a stumbling block in efforts to improve ties between the two neighbours. The two countries frequently accuse the other of delaying the release of the prisoners.

Iran's official news agency IRNA said Tehran had released and repatriated some 10,000 Iraqi POWs in the past year "in a goodwill gesture."

Iraq claims to have released all of the Iranians taken captive during the war but Tehran says Baghdad is still holding some 5,000 Iranian POWs.

Iraq says Iran is holding 20,000 Iraqis prisoner. Tehran has declined to provide a figure for the number of Iraqis its holds.

## Iraqi convicts try suicide in Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — Nineteen Iraqi convicts in Cyprus were rushed to hospital on Friday after poisoning themselves with toilet detergents, prison and hospital officials said.

The Iraqis, jailed for illegal entry, consider themselves political refugees and want residence permits to stay on the island, prison director George Anastasiades told Reuters.

"They are trying to blackmail the state into releasing them and giving them permission to remain in Cyprus but it will not work," Mr. Anastasiades said. He said the Iraqis apparently consumed disinfectant and toilet cleaner, easily accessible in the washrooms of their wing at the central prisons in the capital Nicosia. The 19, who were admitted to hospital for observation with vomiting and abdominal pains, are part of a group of 34 Iraqis jailed for eight months for entering the island illegally. They have completed four months of their sentence.

## JORDAN TELEVISION

**PROGRAMME TWO**  
14:05 ..... Jonny Quest  
14:30 ..... You Bet Your Life  
15:00 ..... Cajou  
15:30 ..... Week-End Special  
16:00 ..... Doc. — World Echo  
16:30 ..... The Famous Five (Drama)  
17:00 ..... News Flash  
17:30 ..... Our World, Their World  
17:15 ..... Doc. — All the Children  
18:00 ..... Magazine — Fast Pas Rever  
19:00 ..... Le Journal  
19:15 ..... Magazine — Sports Et Musique  
19:30 ..... News Headlines  
19:35 ..... Fresh Prince of Bel-Air  
20:00 ..... Auto-Classics  
20:30 ..... The Album Show  
21:10 ..... Doc. — Hold Up the Sun  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:25 ..... Drama — Operation Cobra  
23:50 ..... Yes, Minister?

**PRAYER TIMES**  
05:07 ..... Fair  
06:30 ..... (Sunrise) Doha  
11:57 ..... Dhuhur  
14:21 ..... Asr  
16:44 ..... Maghreb  
18:07 ..... Isha

**CHURCHES**  
St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweiffah. Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
632785.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

**St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590**  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.  
**De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.**  
**Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366**  
**Anglican Church Tel. 652836.**  
**Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.**  
**Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.**  
**St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.**  
**Amman International Church Tel. 827126**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.**  
**German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457**  
**The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.**  
**Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.**  
**The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295**  
**English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.**

**WEATHER**  
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology  
Under the effect of a cold air mass affecting the Kingdom today rainfall is expected with temperatures dropping significantly. Skies will be cloudy to partly cloudy and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, there will be scattered showers, winds southerly light to moderate, and seas rough.

## EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 637111  
Civil Defence Department ..... 661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 630341  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199  
Rescue Police ..... 192 621111, 637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 617101  
Blood Bank ..... 775121  
Highway Police ..... 843402  
Traffic Police ..... 896390  
Public Security Dept. .... 630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 605800  
Price Complaints ..... 661176  
Water & Sewerage Complaints ..... 897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs ..... 661101  
Jordan Television ..... 773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 680100  
J. Electricity Authority ..... 815615  
Electric Power Co. .... 636381  
RJ Flight Information ..... 08-53300  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

**HOSPITALS**  
AMMAN:  
Hussein Medical Centre ..... 813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity ..... 644281/6  
Akileh Maternity ..... 64241/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity ..... 642362  
Malhas, J. Amman ..... 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani ..... 607071  
Shmeisani Hospital ..... 669131  
University Hospital ..... 845845  
Al-Muasher Hospital ..... 667227/9  
The Islamic, Abdali ..... 666126/37  
Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen ..... 777101/3  
Al-Bashir ..... 775111/26  
Army, Marka ..... 891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital ..... 602240/50  
Amal Hospital ..... 674155  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..... 865199

**ZARQA:**  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ..... (09)983323  
Zarqa National Hospital ..... (09)900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital ..... (09)986732  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ..... (09)990990

**IRBID:**  
Princess Basma Hospital ..... (02)755555  
Greek Catholic Hospital ..... (02)727275  
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital ..... (02)247100

**AQABA:**  
Princess Haya Hospital ..... (03)314111

**ARRIVALS**  
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
07:35, Osaka, Bangkok, Dubai (add) (RJ)  
08:15 ..... Bombay (RJ)  
08:35 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
09:15 ..... Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)  
09:50 ..... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:05 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
10:15 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
10:15 ..... Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)  
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
17:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
17:05 ..... Brussels, Paris (RJ)  
17:45 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)  
17:45 ..... London (RJ)  
18:10 ..... Athens (RJ)  
18:40 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)  
19:30 ..... Tunis (RJ)  
19:40 ..... Rome (RJ)  
19:45 ..... Vienna (RJ)  
20:25 ..... Rome (add) (RJ)  
23:35 ..... Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
23:59 ..... Cairo (RJ)

**DEPARTURES**  
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
06:20 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
08:40 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)  
11:00 ..... Tunis (RJ)  
11:15 ..... Rome (RJ)  
11:30 ..... Vienna (RJ)  
11:30 ..... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
12:00 ..... (Rome) (add) (RJ)  
12:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
12:15 ..... London (RJ)  
12:20 ..... Athens (RJ)  
20:00 ..... Jakarta (add) (RJ)  
20:10 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
20:40 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
21:00 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
21:00 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
21:05 ..... Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
21:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
22:10 ..... Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)  
22:45 ..... Bangkok (RJ)  
23:45 ..... Sanaa (RJ)  
03:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ) (add)  
05:45 ..... Marka, Aqaba (add) (RJ)

**Other Flights**  
06:20 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)  
12:40 ..... Bahrain (GF)  
15:20 ..... Moscow (SU)  
15:30 ..... Dubai (EK)

**MARKET PRICES**  
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.  
Apple ..... 700/500  
Banana ..... 550/550  
Banana (imported) ..... 850/600  
Cabbage ..... 500/400  
Carrot ..... 280/150  
Cauliflower ..... 140/100  
Cucumber (large) ..... 120/80  
Cucumber (small) ..... 210/160  
Eggplant ..... 150/90  
Garlic ..... 850/600  
Grape fruit ..... 150/100  
Lemon ..... 350/300  
Marrow (large) ..... 80/40  
Marrow (small) ..... 130/70  
Onion (green) ..... 160/90  
Onion (dry) ..... 170/100  
Orange ..... 560/400  
Pepper (hot) ..... 240/160  
Pepper (sweet) ..... 240/160  
Potato ..... 270/160  
Spinach ..... 130/100  
Spring Bean ..... 380/300  
Tomato ..... 160/100







## Taleban advance north of Kabul

QARABAGH, Afghanistan (R) — Forces of the purist Islamic Taleban have made a major advance north of Kabul, capturing the strategic villages of Qarabagh and Istalif, some 40 kilometres north of the city.

In a fierce 24-hour battle that started Friday morning, Taleban fighters drove opposition forces back at least 10 kilometres, the Taleban governor of Kabul, Mullah Kairullah Khairkhwah, told journalists Saturday.

"Yesterday we launched an attack from Istalif and Qalaqan. We captured the village of Qarabagh and moved north. We have also captured the hills overlooking Bagram Air Base (some 60 kilometres north of Kabul). We have taken over 200 prisoners and there are many dead."

Mullah Khairkhwah was

speaking on a day when planes said to belong to the opposition bombed Kabul Airport and nearby residential districts. They launched two air raids, the first at 6.30 a.m. (0200 GMT).

Local residents said six people were injured. Residents said they believed the raids were in retaliation for the Taleban advances north of Kabul.

When journalists drove to Qarabagh Saturday morning, there were dozens of opposition bodies lying by the road, many of them with bank notes or coins thrust into their mouths or hands — a symbol of the mercenary.

Mullah Khairkhwah said that the Taleban were negotiating with the International Committee of the Red Cross to return the bodies to the opposition.

Hundreds of men, women and children were walking south from the conflict zone to the perceived safety of the south.

The front line was relatively quiet Saturday morning, although opposition planes launched at least one cluster bomb attack on Qarabagh. It did not appear to cause any injuries.

There was also sporadic rocket and artillery fire from both sides. Maulawi Jalaluddin Haqqani, the Taleban frontline commander, told journalists that the fighting had stopped to allow refugees to flee the area.

"The fighting isn't finished, but we are letting the women and children escape the area. When they have gone, we will start fighting again," said Commander Haqqani.

The village of Qarabagh itself was heavily damaged in the fighting and no civilians were in evidence. Many houses had been blown apart and all the pharmacies in the dusty hamlet had been broken open and stripped of their stock.

Taleban fighters had made makeshift examples of their trademark white flag by cutting short lengths of cloth from their turbans.

The fields of surrounding farms were scored by tank tracks and piles of used shells littered the countryside.

The Taleban's recent advance in Qarabagh breaks a month-long deadlock on the front lines north of Kabul. Before Friday's attack, the lines had remained substantially unchanged despite the best efforts of both sides to oust the other.

## 2 bombs wound 19 in Algiers

PARIS (R) — Nineteen people were wounded when two bombs exploded in a cafe and a bakery in Algiers Friday, Algerian newspapers said Saturday, blaming the latest in a string of attacks in the Algerian capital on Muslim rebels.

Two car bombs in Algiers earlier in the week were reported to have killed at least 18 people.

El Watan newspaper said a bomb hidden in a box exploded Friday morning at a bakery in the Muslim fundamentalist stronghold of Eucalyptus in southern Algiers, wounding seven people. Twelve more people

were wounded when a second bomb exploded in a cafe in the same area, said Liberté newspaper.

The newspapers blamed Muslim guerrillas for the two bombings.

On Thursday a car bomb exploded near a paramilitary police station in Algiers, killing at least 10 people and wounding 68.

And on Monday a car bomb ripped through the capital's commercial Larbi Ben Mehidi Street. The security services said it killed three people but local newspapers put the death toll at eight and said more than 70 were wounded.

Liberte said after Monday's attack that the rebels had made a mockery of government claims to have gained the upper hand in the war against the Islamic fundamentalists.

Until recently foreign diplomats in Algiers had described the city as relatively free of the violence that has gripped towns and rural areas, suggesting security forces had managed to keep the Muslim guerrillas at bay.

About 60,000 people have been killed in Algeria since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election which radical Islamists were poised to win.

## Group slams Sri Lanka troops, Tigers for abuses

COLOMBO (AFP) — A human rights group in Sri Lanka Saturday renewed charges against warring Tamil Tiger guerrillas and government forces of bringing death and destruction to civilians in embattled regions.

The University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR) in Jaffna said that separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carried out repeated attacks but failed to provoke the army. However, arrests, rape and torture continued.

"The LTTE continues to attack the security forces in public places, bringing death and destruction to civilians while failing in their campaign to spark reprisals by the army," the UTHR said in its latest 15-page report.

The UTHR consists of academics from the Jaffna University but is based outside the region for fear of attacks by the LTTE as well as the military. A founder member of the panel was killed in Jaffna by gunmen in 1989.

Disappearances continued in the northern peninsula of Jaffna, the capital of Tamil separatism, the group said, adding that soldiers were now better behaved.

"Cases of disappearances after arrest remain significant," the group said. "Contrasting to this is a marked improvement among many members of the security forces in their conduct towards civilians."

Her appointment Saturday comes amid speculation about the roles senior officials in Hong Kong's British colonial government will play after the territory is handed over to China.

"I personally feel that if it is possible for all the principal officials to straddle 1997



Cars are stuck in thick mud in the Keningau area in Sabah, Malaysia. Tropical storm Greg which struck towns and villages in west Sabah late on Christmas Day with winds up to 70 kph (44 mph), triggered heavy rains and floods which swelled rivers, washing away 500 houses and leaving about 3,000 people homeless (Reuter photo)

## Malaysia killer storm death toll rises to 125

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia (R) — The death toll from Malaysia's Christmas Day storm disaster has risen to 125 and rescuers are stepping up the search for at least 100 people still missing, officials said Saturday.

Most of the bodies so far have been found in the logging town of Keningau, the worst affected area. Other bodies were found in the neighbouring towns of Papar, Tuaran and Kota Kinabalu.

Officials said the death toll was expected to rise after three days of searching

for those missing. Tropical storm Greg, which blew ashore from the South China Sea at 70 kph (44 mph) Wednesday, triggered heavy rains and floods which swelled rivers to overflowing, downed power lines and washed out road and communications links.

Keningau, a small logging town 150 kilometres south of Kota Kinabalu, bore the brunt of the floods. Officials said 500 houses in nine villages along four rivers in the town were washed away, leaving about

3,000 people homeless. On Saturday, officials said more than 500 people were helping rescue efforts in the mud-filled villages and towns in eastern Sabah state.

An elite rescue team, the Special Malaysian Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team or SMART, was leading the operation.

Television reports showed that villagers have also started cleaning up the mountain of debris which had engulfed their houses, buried cars and washed out roads.

Officials, who said most

of the dead were Indonesian migrant workers, said the building of houses close to riverbanks and illegal logging were among reasons for the high casualty rate.

A lack of a better alert system for storms was also a chief reason, Malaysian Information Minister Mohammad Rahmat was quoted by local newspapers Saturday.

Top Sabah politician Jeffrey Kitingan said illegal logging upstream from Keningau had compounded the floods. The New Straits Times newspaper reported Saturday.

## Burmese restriction on Suu Kyi's movement not seen easing soon

RANGOON (R) — Burma's military government Saturday showed no sign of relaxing restrictions on the movements of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The government said bombing incidents in Rangoon this week required its vigilance on security.

A military spokesman said he could not say when the government would ease its requirement that the Nobel Peace laureate seek advance military permission to leave her lakeside residence in central Rangoon.

Two bombs exploded at a Buddhist site in a northern Rangoon suburb Wednesday, killing five people and wounding 17.

Asked when the military would allow Ms. Suu Kyi's free movement, the spokesman said: "Under the current situation, it is very hard to say...We still have to be extra careful."

The ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) Friday allowed Ms. Suu Kyi to leave her house for the first time in three weeks.

The opposition leader visited the tomb of her mother Khin Kyi at a cemetery on the eighth anniversary of her death.

Tin Oo, deputy leader of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), said she and NLD members held a 15-minute Buddhist prayer service at the tomb.

The SLORC had since Dec. 3 restricted Ms. Suu Kyi's movement after nearly 2,000 university students took to the streets at the start of a series of the biggest anti-government demonstrations seen in Rangoon since 1988.

Tin Oo said Suu Kyi had no specific plans to leave her compound next week as she did not like to ask for what she regarded as her legal right to freedom of movement.

Suu Kyi and the student protesters have denied any political links but the government has accused some NLD members, exiled students and outlawed Burmese Communists of instigating the protests.

The government had

blamed this week's bomb blasts on the exiled All-Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) and the rebel Karen National Union (KNU). The ABSDF has denied any link to the bomb attack.

The bombs exploded at different places at the Buddhist site, where thousands of pilgrims had gathered to pay homage to the sacred tooth relic, which was on loan from China. The second explosion caused all the deaths and injuries.

A commentary in state-run newspapers Saturday said the bombing incidents could not harm Burmese-Chinese relations.

It said: "China and Myanmar have been united since they were born. Those wishing to obstruct the greatness of Sino-Myanmar relations have caused explosions and destruction."

The papers quoted Russian Ambassador Valeri Nazarov as saying: "This unprecedentedly cynical act of terrorism can cause nothing but the strongest feelings of shock, indignation and protest."

## U.S. 'concerned' at Tibetan sentencing

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has said it was concerned at China's reported sentencing of a Tibetan-born former Fulbright Scholar to 18 years in prison on espionage charges.

"The United States is quite concerned" about the reported prison term handed down to Ngawang Choephel, 30, who was detained by Chinese authorities in Tibet in 1995, State Department spokesman John Dinger told reporters.

The United States knew nothing of his activities other than making a documentary. Mr. Dinger said, "We have no independent information that he was in fact involved in any other activities" than videotaping the documentary about Tibet's traditional music and dance, he said.

Mr. Ngawang Choephel studied ethnomusicology at Middlebury College in Vermont in 1992-93 as a Fulbright Scholar, an international educational exchange programme funded by the U.S. Information Agency.

The International Campaign for Tibet, a Washington-based group that monitors human rights, said he

had been filming a documentary about traditional Tibetan music and dance that he feared would be lost because of alleged Chinese efforts to dilute local culture. He was arrested in a market in Shigatse, Tibet, on or about Sept. 15, 1995.

Contrary to some published reports, he had not been travelling as a Fulbright Scholar at the time of his arrest, Mr. Dinger said. "I think I can assure you he was not there under U.S. auspices — certainly not a Fulbright Scholar — and to the best of my knowledge he was not there on any other activities connected to the United States."

A Chinese radio report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation said Mr. Ngawang Choephel had confessed to having been sent to Tibet by "the Dalai (Lama) clique" on behalf of an unnamed foreign country to conduct espionage activities.

In an Oct. 15 letter to members of Congress who had asked about Mr. Ngawang Choephel's disappearance, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Li Daoyou alleged that the Tibetan, "funded by some Americans" and

posing as a film-maker, had been gathering intelligence and fostering "illegal separatist activities."

China frequently accuses the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and political leader of more than six million Tibetans and winner of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, of fomenting anti-Chinese revolt in Tibet, which Chinese troops entered in large numbers in 1950.

The State Department repeated that it was concerned about the preservation of Tibet's unique cultural, linguistic and religious heritage. In addition, the department said it was continuing to urge the Chinese authorities to release all those held for the peaceful expression of their political or religious views.

The International Campaign for Tibet dismissed Ngawang Choephel's reported confession as insignificant because of possible duress. "Everyone knows that all confessions are imposed" in China and Tibet, said Bhuchung Tsering, a spokesman for the campaign in Washington.

## Hong Kong chief secretary to remain after 1997

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong's most popular political figure, Chief Secretary Anson Chan, accepted an offer Saturday to remain in her post after the territory reverts to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997.

Ms. Chan, 56, who is head of Hong Kong's 180,000 civil servants, said she was "extremely grateful" for the offer from Tung Chee-hwa, who will head Hong Kong's government under Chinese rule.

"I am of course delighted to accept" the offer to be chief of administration, Ms. Chan told reporters after the two-hour breakfast meeting with Mr. Tung.

Ms. Chan, a suave, elegantly dressed communicator, was by far the most popular choice among Hong Kong residents for the chief executive's post eventually awarded to Mr. Tung by a Beijing-appointed committee. Ms. Chan avoided hard feelings by opting to take herself out of the race early.

Her appointment Saturday comes amid speculation about the roles senior officials in Hong Kong's British colonial government will play after the territory is handed over to China.

"I personally feel that if it is possible for all the principal officials to straddle 1997

and to continue to serve the people of Hong Kong, this will do a great deal to instill confidence and maintain morale in the civil service," said Ms. Chan.

Ms. Chan is a principal advisor to Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten, but her most important role is as head of the civil service — the only official institution in Hong Kong apart from the judiciary that will survive the handover intact.

"I know that I can work very, very happily with Mr. Tung because we both share a common objective and that is how to maintain a smooth transition and confidence and prosperity in Hong Kong after 1997," she said.

Mr. Tung reflected her sentiments.

"I believe we will be able to cooperate very happily because we are both colleagues and very good friends, and the most important thing is that we both cherish a better future for Hong Kong," he said.

Mr. Tung was named Hong Kong's first chief executive on Dec. 11 by the Selection Committee, a panel of business people, pro-China politicians and trade unionists.

In one of his first statements he made after the

appointment, Mr. Tung said he hoped Ms. Chan would stay on as chief secretary.

The first official meeting between Mr. Tung, a shipping magnate, and Ms. Chan was held Saturday at Mr. Tung's exclusive residence on Hong Kong Island.

Mr. Tung said he shared Ms. Chan's view on the need "for maintaining the integrity, the political neutrality and the confidence of the civil service."

Ms. Chan said it was important that civil servants should remain politically neutral during the transfer of sovereignty.

Ms. Chan also said she would arrange meetings between Mr. Tung and other principal officials in the Hong Kong government next week, and hoped Mr. Tung would soon choose his administrative team.

Analysts have said a Tung-Chan team would combine Mr. Tung's extensive personal connections in Beijing and Mr. Chan's widespread support in the administration.

Mr. Chan said several government officials would help Mr. Tung set up his private office in a centrally located building in the banking district of central. The government will also

provide Mr. Tung a driver and car for his private use.

Mr. Tung has already held his first official meeting with governor Chris Patten, but the two failed to bridge a deep rift over the body appointed by China to legislate in Hong Kong from next July.

Mr. Tung Saturday remained adamant that he would continue to pursue Patten to accept the inevitability that the provisional legislature would be set up.

The provisional body, composed of pro-Beijing politicians and businessmen, was set up a week ago to replace the Legislative Council that was elected last year under democratic reforms spearheaded by Mr. Patten.

The governor has dubbed the process to set up the new 60-seat body a "bizarre farce" and "stomach-turning," and insisted he would do nothing to help its operations.

Britain and the United States have sharply criticised the provisional legislature, and other countries have urged China to let the elected assembly see out its four-year mandate until September 1998.

## S. Korean strikes turn violent, threaten banks

SEOUL (R) — Strikes engulfing South Korea turned violent for the first time Saturday as rock-throwing workers backed by students fought pitched battles with riot police in Seoul.

A militant union leader vowed to meet "force with force," raising the prospect of further clashes. Police unleashed barrages of tear gas canisters at about 6,000 workers to stop them marching down a busy thoroughfare to Myeongdong Cathedral in the city centre in protest at a tough new labour law, witnesses said.

Police vehicles spraying tear gas from long nozzles saturated marchers, who responded by ripping up paving stones and hurling them at squads of officers.

At least six protesters were hauled away, witnesses said. "We will respond to force with force," said Kim Young-Dae, vice-president of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the sponsor of the rally.

"We will carry out strikes as planned and no rallies will be cancelled," a similar protest is planned for Sunday.

The government has condemned the stoppages as illegal and threatened unspecified "punishment" but has so far shown restraint in handling some of the worst industrial strife since the late 1980s.

Meanwhile, snowballing strikes that have devastated industry now threaten the financial sector. Banking unions announced a one day stoppage next Saturday and said a decision would be taken later on whether to extend the action.

Tellers and clerks at commercial banks and mutual savings firms feel vulnerable because financial market opening is expected to spark a wave of mergers in the heavily-protected industry, resulting in job cuts.

Next Saturday's strikes will also affect the Central Bank of Korea. But transport chaos was largely averted when non-union drivers kept trains running on the

Seoul subway. Nurses and orderlies at three more hospitals walked out, bringing to 17 the number of medical centres forced to close all but emergency care.

The government said stoppages that have almost completely idled car and ship production will cost the country more than \$1 billion in lost production by the year's end. This was on top of \$3.2 billion already lost through strikes.

Unions claimed 375,000 workers at around 700 work sites had joined the walkout by Saturday. Two union umbrella bodies have called out their combined membership of 1.7 million.

Workers fear the law means that decades of job security are coming to an end, while the government argues that more flexible labour practices will secure jobs in the long run.

Clashes broke out after workers broke away from a three-hour rally in a park to denounce the government of President Kim Young-Sam.

Sam for passing the labour law in a clandestine session of parliament Thursday.

Demonstrators set alight piles of banners and protest placards to keep police at bay and produce smoke to counter the effects of the stinging gas.

Bonfires flickered along a long stretch of road as protesters and police fought running battles.

Student radicals that infiltrated the protests were responsible for some of the rock throwing, witnesses said.

The rally began peacefully as smiling demonstrators held aloft colourful balloons and banners and occasionally linked arms to sing protest songs.

"The new law will turn us into slaves, not workers. I am here to stop that from happening," said KIA motors worker Chun Jong-II. "Overthrow the democracy-killing Kim Young-Sam government," workers chanted.





Serbian riot policemen arrest a protester during a rally of the opposition coalition in Belgrade. Former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, back from a mission to Serbia, urged President Slobodan Milosevic to install 'real democracy' and respect opposition victories in recent local elections (Reuter photo)

## Indonesian riot blamed on unnamed groups as toll rises

**TASIKMALAYA, Indonesia (R)** — Indonesian Muslim leaders have accused unnamed groups with possible Communist links of causing riots in a West Java town this week, where a mob of mainly Muslim youths set buildings and churches ablaze.

On Saturday, hundreds of troops continued to patrol Tasikmalaya, 200 kilometres southeast of Jakarta, after Thursday's violence, apparently sparked by a report of police brutality towards some Muslim teachers.

Hasan Basri, head of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (Muslim scholars), blamed a "formless organisation" possibly linked to the long-banned Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) for being behind the riot.

"Maybe they are (members of) an amorphous organisation (OTB)," Mr. Basri was quoted as saying by the official Antara News Agency as saying.

OTB is a government term which refers to unnamed groups suspected of Communist-like activities.

Mr. Basri said OTBs were always close to any social unrest and quick to take advantage of any situation of potential or actual conflict, particularly in events involving religious believers.

Amien Rais, head of the 20-million-strong Muslim social and educational group Muhammadiyah also was quoted by Antara as saying the crowd in Tasikmalaya was incited after it gathered at the police station to protest at the reports of police brutality.

"I have a strong suspicion that there were people who stirred up the crowd to do the damage. We are not looking for a scapegoat, but it is logical that such a thing can be guessed," he said.

Some normality was returning to the town Saturday with a number of the shops away from the centre of the damage opening for business as troops continued to block roads and guard the worst hit sections.

Workers are loading the shells of burnt-out vehicles onto trucks as others sweep the streets in the centre of town, one witness said.

"Other people, including some religious boarding schools, are painting over the graffiti which says 'police are dogs' and 'police are traitors,'" the witness said.

The military said two people had died in the violence, which focused on businesses owned by ethnic Chinese as well as Christian churches and schools, but a newspaper in the capital Jakarta put the death toll at four.

The daily Suara Pembaruan daily Saturday said four people had died, including an ethnic Chinese woman who was burnt to death in her shop and a looter who fell off the back of a moving vehicle.

The paper said the bodies of two other victims remained unidentified in a Tasikmalaya hospital. The Legal Aid Institute said 160 people had been arrested.

## 460,000 Rwandans back from Tanzania — U.N.

**KIGALI (R)** — Some 460,000 Rwandan refugees have returned to Rwanda from Tanzania before a Tanzanian deadline of Tuesday for all 540,000 to leave, the U.N. refugee agency said Saturday.

Paul Stromberg, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said more than 21,500 refugees crossed from northwestern Tanzania to Rwanda Friday, most of them on trucks.

"This takes the total in December to about 460,000. Today we expect them to continue with the last big group of refugees from the Karagwe Camps crossing either today or Sunday," he said. "After that we expect smaller groups to keep arriving."

He said Tanzanian authorities detained more than 50 Rwandans from camps around the northwestern town of Ngara and perhaps 100 from the Karagwe camps. UNHCR was in contact with officials over what would happen to the detainees and their families, he added.

Troops and police stopped hundreds of thousands of refugees from fleeing deeper into Tanzania. U.N. officials said they had reports some refugees were brutally treated to force them home.

The Dec. 31 deadline set by the Tanzanian government for all 540,000 Rwandan refugees to leave followed the return of an estimated 600,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees from eastern Zaire after they were forced out of their camps in October and November.

The Hutu refugees in Tanzania and Zaire fled from Rwanda in 1994 after some took part in the genocide of about 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Rwanda's first genocide trial opened in the south-eastern town of Kibungo Friday with the two accused facing the death penalty if they are convicted of taking part in the genocide. Neither of the accused in Kibungo has defence lawyers.

Large numbers of refugees in eastern Zaire fled deeper into the country rather than return to Rwanda.

A UNHCR mission to eastern Zaire on Dec. 18-20 found as many as 270,000 Rwandan refugees at Tingi-Tingi and around the eastern town of Shabunda and aid agencies are struggling to reach them.

"The problem is the sites are practically inaccessible. So the problem is how to get aid in before anything else," Mr. Stromberg said.

## Gandhi descendant on hunger strike over celibacy ridicule

**BOMBAY (AFP)** — A descendant of Mahatma Gandhi said Saturday he was on a 24-hour hunger strike in protest at a Hindu politician's comments ridiculing his great-grandfather's experiments with celibacy.

Tushar Gandhi, 36, who began his fast with two friends Friday at the foot of a bronze statue of Gandhi in downtown Bombay, said he would end the fast Saturday evening after a prayer.

The hunger strike was aimed at denouncing hawkish Hindu leader Bal Thackeray, the founder of the Shiv Sena (Shivaji's Army) party which rules the western state of Maharashtra, of which Bombay is capital.

Mr. Thackeray, in a public meeting here Tuesday, called Gandhi, known as the apostle of truth, a "fraud celibate" who always had two women with him.

Mr. Gandhi, revered in India as the father of the nation for his role in the non-violent protest movement that led to independence from British colonial rule, advocated celibacy for a healthy life.

In his autobiography "my experiments with truth" he admitted he initially found celibacy tough and his wife Kasturba found his resolve difficult to understand.

In his later years, the frail leader was often accompanied by his nieces Abha and Manu and he would walk with his arms over their shoulders for support.

Police pickets were posted at the venue of the hunger strike and a steady stream of supporters and opposition political party leaders called on Mr. Tushar Gandhi expressing support and pleading mass protest actions.

Mr. Gandhi told AFP he was not expecting an apology from Mr. Thackeray.

"I am not dealing with a civilised leader of a civilised party. It is pointless saying anything to such people," he said.

"All talk of Thackeray's might is a myth. He is a coward who cannot step out of his door without government security."

Mr. Gandhi said the protest was an expression of his "deep sense of hurt," and there was wide support for his views.

"My wife has received a large number of phone calls from people expressing outrage at Thackeray's remarks," he said.

Mr. Gandhi said it was not the first time his famous ancestor, a leading figure of India's 111-year-old Congress-I Party, had been put down.

"I am beginning to wonder if India is ashamed of Gandhi. If so they should declare him a non-public figure and I will mourn him in private as my ancestor," he said.

Mr. Tushar Gandhi, a graphic designer, last year forced the Hong Kong-based Star TV to take a talk show off the air for allowing a gay activist to abuse the Mahatma during an appearance.

The Congress-I, the main opposition party in the state, said it would launch protests if Mr. Thackeray did not immediately apologise.

Congress leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar described Mr. Thackeray's comments as "an attempt to spit at the sun."

"He should be ashamed. What is his worth? What is his class? He is a coward," he said.

## Yugoslav Socialist newspaper says opposition won elections

**BELGRADE (R)** — Serbia's main Socialist newspaper Saturday published an OSCE ruling that the opposition won control of main towns from President Slobodan Milosevic in disputed elections.

But there was no hint from the ruling Socialist Party (SPS) that Mr. Milosevic, in the midst of a struggle for his own political survival, was ready to surrender them.

The daily Politika gave a full account of the report by a mission from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which said the Zajedno (Together) Coalition won Belgrade and 14 other towns in the Nov. 17 poll.

Almost six weeks of street protests against Socialist Party election fraud have turned increasingly violent since Christmas Eve when Zajedno activists fought rival Socialist demonstrators and riot police in Belgrade.

Vuk Draskovic, leader of one of the three Zajedno parties, urged opposition supporters to attend the funeral of a man alleged to have been killed in rioting on Dec. 24.

Mr. Draskovic's SPO party said Predrag Starcevic was trampled in a stampede by opposition activists to escape a police charge.

Zajedno's other leaders were attending the funeral but had no comment on the circumstances of Mr. Starcevic's death.



Serbian riot police block a student demonstration against the government in Belgrade Friday

Police have arrested a 46-year-old SPS supporter from Novi Sad suspected of shooting Zajedno activist Ivica Lazovic in the head during the Christmas Eve incidents.

The findings of the OSCE mission, led by former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, have yet to be adopted by the body although most of its Western members, including the United States, have led international condemnation of Mr. Milosevic's refusal to admit his election defeats.

They have also blamed him for the outbreak of street violence on Dec. 24 when the SPS tried to stage a demonstration at the same time and place as Zajedno's daily protests which previously were peaceful and good-humoured.

Mr. Gonzalez' report, which was expected after mission members said they had found blatant examples of election rigging, gave Mr. Milosevic an exit route from the crisis.

One option trailed by diplomats was that he would turn over the disputed towns

but quickly order fresh municipal elections to restore Socialist rule, now facing its biggest threat in half a century of unbroken power.

There is no guarantee, however, that in Serbia's present mood the SPS could win fair elections in which Zajedno also had access to the state-dominated media.

Had Mr. Milosevic admitted defeat immediately after the elections, the Socialist government would have had plenty of opportunity to show opposition administration was inept.

Several weeks later, the SPS now has less room for manoeuvre with the West awake to the need to keep up the pressure on Mr. Milosevic for authentic democratic reforms.

Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic said the OSCE report was "considered and balanced" without mentioning its recommendation that opposition victories should be restored.

Mr. Gonzalez acknowledged that the SPS had been

victorious in an overwhelming number of other municipalities.

The humiliation for Mr. Milosevic was that the SPS was repudiated in big industrial towns which are supposed to be the bedrock of the party's support.

Since the Christmas Eve confrontation which turned out badly for the SPS, Mr. Milosevic has concentrated on preventing Zajedno and its student supporters from continuing marches which have disrupted the capital for more than six hours a day since Nov. 19.

This has meant using riot police to push the protestors off the streets into pedestrian areas to hold their rallies.

The risk of this provoking violence became evident Friday when clashes broke out in which plain clothes police armed with clubs were prominent.

Meanwhile, Serbian police beatings of journalists covering protests in Belgrade drew the wrath of an

international media group, which slammed the action as a policy to try to discourage coverage of massive anti-government protests.

The Committee to Protect Journalists expressed its "profound distress" at the beatings Thursday and Friday of video camera operators, photographers and reporters, according to a statement from the group's New York City office.

"Judging from reports to CPJ by both foreign and domestic journalists in Belgrade, it appears that the Serbian government is implementing an official policy to discourage local and foreign independent coverage of public events through violent police attacks and confiscation of camera equipment, videotapes and film," the group said.

The group listed seven incidents between Dec. 26 and 27 in which media personnel were beaten or had their equipment damaged. Some of the injured required hospitalisation.

## Candidates line up for Chechen presidential poll

**MOSCOW (R)** — A deputy prime minister in Chechnya's separatist government has stepped down as he and a handful of other figures made preparations to run in the Russian region's presidential election on Jan. 27.

Movladi Udugov, the secessionist rebels' spokesman throughout nearly two years of war with Russian forces, was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying he was leaving his post to ensure his eligibility for the election.

With the Electoral Commission closing applications at midnight Friday, it seemed likely there would be either five or six candidates next month.

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, a 44-year-old writer who took over as president of the self-declared Republic of Ichkeria after the death of separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev in a rocket attack in April, is already registered, ITAR-TASS news agency said.

So is Shamil Basayev, one of the rebels' most successful field commanders who led a bloody hostage-taking raid against the southern Russian town of Budennovsk in June 1995.

Five candidates, all of them leading figures in the war against Russian control, have provided the Electoral

Commission with 10,000 signatures of support.

The signature list of a sixth potential contender, Yusip Soslanbekov, the leader of the Caucasus Peoples' Confederation, is still in the process of being verified, TASS said.

Standing against Mr. Udugov, Mr. Yandarbiyev and Commander Basayev are Aslan Maskhadov, a former Soviet army colonel who had overall command of the guerrilla forces and now is prime minister of the separatist government, and Akhmed Zakayev, an actor turned field commander who is Mr. Yandarbiyev's security adviser.

The latter two have until Jan. 2 to resign their posts in order to be registered formally for the election.

Mr. Udugov told NTV television Friday that the five separatist candidates agreed Thursday that, while they were not prepared to unite behind a single candidate they would each support whoever among them turned out to be the winner.

Denying speculation that the multiplicity of candidates was evidence of a deep split in the separatist ranks, Mr. Udugov said: "There is no split in the Chechen leadership. I must saddle our enemies, but there will also be no split."

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## Bosnian Serbs set to form own professional army

**JAHERINA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP)** — The Bosnian Serb parliament Saturday approved a bill that paves the way for the Serb area of Bosnia to set up its own professional army, the Serb Republic News Agency (SRNA) reported.

The law, approved by the parliament in Jajce, near Sarajevo, signals the latest in a series of efforts by the leadership of Republika Srpska (RS), the Serb entity in Bosnia, to clean up its armed forces.

In November RS President Biljana Plavsic sacked Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic and several top military officers.

Gen. Mladic, who is wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, and the other officers only agreed to quit after a tense three-week standoff.

Under the new law, "the professional armed forces are responsible for defending the territorial

integrity and constitutional order of the Republika Srpska." Military service is also cut down from 18 to nine months.

In a clause implicitly aimed at Serbs of the rump Yugoslavia — including Serbia and Montenegro — the law stipulates that people who do not have the Bosnian Serb citizenship can still volunteer to join the army in case of conflict.

The meeting was the parliament's third since Bosnia's elections in Sep-

tember. Serb deputies decided to exempt non-Serb deputies — Muslim and Croat — from taking oath, so they could take part in the session.

The first two sessions were marked by the refusal of the Muslim and Croat deputies to be sworn in. They object to Orthodox religious elements in the oath.

Serbs are predominantly Orthodox Christians while Croats are predominantly Roman Catholics.

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## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
Established 1975

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

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Director General:

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Jordan Press Foundation,  
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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the  
Jordan Times advertising department.

### Budget through poor debate

AFTER FOUR days of long, but not necessarily thorough, debate, the Lower House of Parliament yesterday endorsed the draft budget for 1997. Over 40 deputies expressed their views on the draft budget which was initially studied and endorsed by the House's Finance Committee. But most of the speeches were not different from those made last year, the year before or even the year before the year before. In fact, the whole debate was not different from the previous debates the House has had on earlier budgets.

Most lawmakers spoke in general terms. They criticised concepts without going into details of specific situations. They made demands and raised theories about grand themes like self-sufficiency and economic growth and less foreign debts.

That the debate was not richer in substance and did not represent fresh and creative ideas is sad. Jordanians would have been more satisfied had the House done a better job at analysing the various elements of the budget or offered alternative plans to the government and its economic policies. That is indeed a faulty situation for which the House is responsible, but not entirely.

It is no secret that many of the deputies with economic or financial experiences are not members of the Finance Committee. Some of them are serving in the government which render them committed to its policies even if they are among the members of the Finance Committee. Other qualified legislators did or could not join the committee for political reasons and rivalry among different political orientations in Parliament. The committee thus did not have the expertise it needed in order to study the draft budget in a scientific and detailed manner. While it is true that all House members need not be experts on issues with which the House has to deal, and the Finance Committee could and did summon experts which helped them do their jobs, the legislature is operating on too small a budget in order to perform its mission satisfactorily. For instance the Lower House could employ full-time staff who can assist deputies in their work but unfortunately that has not been done yet. Unlike in other democracies, Jordanian lawmakers do not have aides that research for them and provide them with accurate and scientific information upon which to base their decisions. Therefore something needs to be done about that.

Jordanians have a right to expect their government to help enable their representatives to do their job best by providing them with all the facilities and personnel assistance they need. In fact, the House should be legally entitled to enough funds and provisions that equip it with the tools to serve the people and the country better.

But until that happens, the House can at least better utilise the expertise it has. It is unacceptable that deputies with something to offer to the discussion of the budget chose to stay or are kept out of the Finance Committee. Jordan and its people deserve better service.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE LATEST development in the negotiations over the redeployment of Israeli forces in the Hebron area resulted from two factors: Washington's direct intervention and the Arab countries' pressure, according to Hussein Abu Rumman, a writer for Al Ra'i. Saturday, The United States, which is the sponsor of the Middle East peace process, must have felt embarrassed to see the peace process face total collapse because of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attitude and policies and so it immediately sent its envoy to the region to address the situation, said the writer. Furthermore, the Arab countries, backed by the world community in general and the European Union in particular, have exercised real and concerted pressure on the Israeli government to comply with the requirements of peace and to respect the agreements signed with the Palestinians, said the writer. The conclusion of an agreement on Hebron calls for hope that the two sides will now move ahead along the path of negotiations for a final settlement, said the writer. But he expressed the view that the Arabs and the Israelis will continue to need the intervention of the United States and of a concerted Arab effort if the future negotiations are to achieve positive results.

A WRITER for Al Dustour criticised the dual containment policy adopted by the United States against Iraq and Iran and said that this policy was a total failure, particularly in the case of Iran. Washington's hostile attitude against Iraq prompted most of the Arab Gulf states to demand that the U.N. sanctions on Baghdad end and that Iraq be allowed to play an important role in regional defence matters and in protecting Arab interests, said George Haddad. The writer said the United States has not been able to prevent Tehran from receiving arms from China, Korea and Russia and was not able to prevent Iran from concluding excellent trade agreements with Turkey, Germany and other nations. The American policy has succeeded in one direction though, and that is enabling Iran to increase its military power at the expense of Iraq and its Arab neighbours in the Gulf region, according to the writer. He said that by imposing sanctions and blockades on other countries, the United States seems to be imposing sanctions on itself and isolating itself from the rest of the world.

### Sunday's Economic Pulse

## Reasons for foreign investment in Jordan

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

IN AN attempt to identify barriers to investment in Jordan, the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC), GMA Capital Markets Ltd., conducted a survey covering 90 potential investors involved or interested in the Middle East. The project was financed by U.K. Overseas Development Administration and European Commission.

The preliminary findings were put to test in a workshop organised by the IPC, and attended by over 35 government officials and businessmen from the private sector.

The surveyed potential foreign investors identified nine reasons to invest in a country in the Middle East, especially Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco. These reasons were:

- Presence in the region is primarily driven by many organisation's corporate global strategy.
- Geographical proximity to European countries
- Financial incentives from European Union (EU) to encourage investment.
- Growth in business community attracts more companies (snowball effect).
- Growth in domestic markets, as countries develop economically.
- Growth in tourism market.
- Liberalisation/deregulation of some market sectors.
- Political stability relative to other neighbouring countries.
- Cultural affinities and historical business links.

It is obvious that most of the above reasons represent general circumstances or a current state of affairs. They were not meant in particular to attract foreign investments. Except for liberalisation of the markets, none of the above-mentioned factors come about as a result of specific plans or policies which the states concerned adopted for the specific purpose of attracting foreign investors.

It is astonishing that potential investors did not mention the Arab-Israeli peace process which we, at one time, thought will cause a flow of foreign investments to the region.

Foreign investors, especially Europeans, which selected Jordan as a place for their investments in the Middle East, cited six factors underlying their selection:

- Liberalisation of the market.
- High growth of gross national product (GNP), but from low base.
- Diversification, extending the geographical coverage of their firms.
- Familiarity with language and culture (Jordanian expatriates).
- Personal relationships (Jordanians and Palestinians based in Europe).
- Education and high literacy levels.

It is evident that the requirements of the Arab and foreign investors are more or less the same requirements of economic and social development and modernisation which

we in Jordan should realise irrespective of their impact on foreign investments. To put it differently, attracting foreign investors is not costly; what these investors expect us to do for them is what we should do for ourselves for our own sake.

It is worth noting that potential investors did not mention the tax exemptions which do not make sense. Such exemptions represent a sizeable financial loss to the treasury while producing nothing by way of investment encouragement.

Recently, we took a good step in reducing income tax rates and tax holidays. It is high time to remove all tax exemptions and tax holidays, except for customs tax and sales tax on productive capital assets which should enjoy an absolute tax exemption for new and old investors alike.

It seems that reasons to select Jordan as a place for investment are not strong enough. No wonder that foreign investments in Jordan are so far very little. However, after signing the Jordanian-European partnership agreement, in a matter of months, and after joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) within a year, Jordan will become more attractive to Arab and foreign investors. The flow of foreign investments will compensate Jordan for the cost of entering these two enterprises, knowing that the expected fierce competition will kill numerous economic units which lack the ability to survive and withstand competition with very little protection.

## 'Enlarging NATO is the right thing to do'

By Ronald D. Asmus

SANTA MONICA, California — As North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) foreign ministers gather for their fall meeting, the sceptics about enlargement are again sounding their siren calls of alarm, claiming that the alliance is about to commit a major strategic blunder and suggesting that enlargement be slowed. Such calls should be rejected, for the logic upon which they rest is flawed. Enlarging NATO is the right thing to do, and this is the time to launch the process.

Enlargement is part of a new vision for a European security order based on a unified and integrated Europe in permanent alliance with the United States and hopefully, also in a cooperative partnership with Russia.

To achieve that vision, we must extend to the continent's eastern half the same structures that guarantee security in the western half,

build a new relationship between this new trans-Atlantic community and Russia, and simultaneously reform and reorient the alliance's military structures and capabilities to face the new strategic challenges to shared interests in and beyond Europe.

NATO enlargement is the first step in implementing that vision. The goal is to do for Eastern Europe what was done for Western Europe — create a security framework under which these countries can safely complete their transition to Western democratic societies.

These countries in Eastern Europe want to join the alliance for the same reasons that current members in Western Europe want to keep it — to sustain a strategic relationship between the United States and Europe, to provide the security umbrella under which integration can proceed, and as an insurance policy against an uncertain future.

These countries want to

be members of the Atlantic community, not neutral. For existing alliance members who already have security guarantees and who would never consider neutrality for themselves to tell these countries that they do not need such guarantees and that they should be content with the status of, for example, Austria or Finland, is not only hypocritical, but ignores the fact that the neutrals are starting to rethink their attitudes toward NATO as well.

The prospect of NATO enlargement has already contributed enormously to reform and reconciliation in Eastern Europe. From the Baltic to the Black Sea, foreign and defence policies are being reconstructed in order to bring these countries into line with alliance norms. Rarely has a Western policy had such an impact in eliciting such positive change.

Eastern Europe today is already more stable just because of the prospect of NATO enlargement. To slow down or abandon this

process would surely lead to a backlash, producing less, not more, stability in the region.

It is up to Russia to decide for itself whether it wants to help build this new European security order or to fight it. All current and future members of NATO hope that Russia decides to participate.

Indeed, this transformed and enlarged NATO may well be better able to cooperate with Russia than the current one.

No one in the alliance is trying to isolate or humiliate Moscow. The alliance has been both generous and flexible in trying to discuss ways in which Russia might be included in this process. But Russia has refused to engage fully in these discussions, as it is still trying to prevent enlargement.

Slowing down enlargement will not make it any easier to deal with Moscow on this issue. It could make things worse.

NATO opted to move slowly on enlargement in the hope and belief that by

doing so it could use the intervening period to convince Moscow that enlargement was not directed against it. This has not happened. Instead, Western policy has turned into a kind of Chinese water torture in which every couple of months we pledge to enlarge. But this slow drawn-out process has given rise to hopes in Moscow that the alliance might still change its mind or that Russia could still stop the process.

If NATO were to now further slow down the process, it would only prolong the fight over enlargement and perhaps lead some Russians to conclude that a confrontational course on enlargement has paid off.

To be sure, the alliance should go the extra mile to try to address Russian concerns before enlargement. But Russian attitudes may start to change only once enlargement starts to take place and they see that their worst fears are unjustified.

In an ideal world, NATO and the European Union

should enlarge in tandem. The United States has always been sceptical about linking the two because it feared that a timetable for EU enlargement would slip — as now appears to be happening. But the solution to this problem should not be to slow down the enlargement of NATO, but rather to speed up EU enlargement.

The alliance is hardly moving rapidly or recklessly. Indeed, it is a bit difficult to imagine it moving more cautiously than it has. The issue has been debated and studied ad nauseam. The time for debating has ended; it is now time to act. This is why President Bill Clinton has called for a NATO summit and set a deadline for the first new members to be included no later than the spring of 1999.

The writer is a senior analyst at the Rand Corporation. This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

## World population growth could stabilise by 2025

By Joanne Kenen  
Reuters

WASHINGTON — World population is growing more slowly than in recent years and with a concerted effort to defuse a "demographic time bomb" population could stabilise at eight billion by 2025, an advocacy group said on Friday.

The Population Institute, which released the study on global population and fertility trends, urged President Bill Clinton to act by Feb. 1, under a provision that could free up global population funds that have been appropriated but may not be released by the Republican-controlled Congress.

Werner Fornos, president of the Washington-based institute, said the world's population is growing by almost 90 million annually, more slowly than the 100 million growth of recent years. But he said the rate was still too high for the planet to support.

The world's population is nearing 5.9 billion, and will be over six billion by the year 2000. But he said it was "a dream and a possibility" to stabilise the population at eight billion by 2025 "if we keep doing what works."

He was encouraged by the recent slowing of the growth rate, which he attributed in part to better education and opportunities for girls and women. And he said the 1994

World Population and Development Conference in Cairo had led to genuine progress in making voluntary family planning available to more couples.

"Aside from universal access to affordable family planning, equity and equality for women is the most important intervention that can be taken for slowing population growth, as well as for helping the poorest to escape poverty," the institute report said.

Some nations, including Thailand, Turkey and Brazil, have sharply reduced their growth rates but others, among them Nigeria, Ethiopia and several Central American nations, are on a course to double their population within 30 years, the report found.

As other studies have found, the richer countries use a disproportionate share of the world's resources. He said the United States has four per cent of the world's population, and uses 30 per cent of the resources.

Overall, rich countries have a fifth of the world's population but use four-fifths of the resources, he said.

Mr. Fornos urged China to adopt a voluntary family planning programme, instead of its current one-child per family requirements. He also said that many practising Roman Catholics use contraception despite the ban by the Vatican.

## Hong Kong's new boss speaks China's language

By Gwynne Dyer

THE BRITISH empire's remaining population is due to drop by 99 per cent next June 30, when the colony of Hong Kong passes under Chinese Communist rule, but some things will not change. It will still be true that the sun never sets on the British Empire (thanks to the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic, Pitcairn Island in the Pacific, and Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean). And there will still be no nonsense about democracy in Hong Kong.

On Dec. 12, an unelected group of 400 people, called simply the selection committee, gave their blessing to the new "chief executive" who will take over from the last British governor when Hong Kong becomes a special administrative region of the Chinese People's Republic in six months' time.

All 400 people (mostly businessmen) on the selection committee were hand-picked by Beijing. So was the winning candidate, Tung Chee-hwa. Yet Tung is no obvious Communist puppet: he is a billionaire businessman who was educated in Britain and worked for ten years in the United States. As six and a half million Hong Kong Chinese nervously contemplate the prospect of falling under Communist rule, Beijing is doing what it can to calm their fears.

Tung Chee-hwa (C.H. to his friends) is an establishment figure as Hong Kong has to offer. Not only is he a rich businessman, but he is the son of a rich businessman: his father, the flamboyant C.Y. Tung, built up one of the world's largest shipping empires. So the Hong Kong business community feels safe

enough not to pull out its foreign passports and leave, which is very important if "New York East", the financial capital of developing Asia, is to survive the hand over unscathed.

Yet, at the same time, Tung is safely in Beijing's pocket. The shipping empire he and his brother inherited got into deep trouble after their father's death, and was only saved in 1985 by the third largest corporate bail-out (after Chrysler and Lockheed) in business history. The key contribution of \$120 million, a vote of confidence that turned the tide in Tung's favour, came from the Chinese Communist government.

"C.H. is a fully-owned subsidiary of the People's Republic of China," said a senior Hong Kong civil servant (off the record, of course). "They own him, and he knows it." But Tung's relationship to Beijing is more complex than that, being based on gratitude rather than fear, and his intimacy with the elderly Chinese Communist leadership may even be an asset for Hong Kong.

"He knows how to communicate with Communist leaders," said David Chu, a property magnate who has known Tung since they both worked in Boston in the late 60s — and Chu reckons that is a vital and rare skill in Hong Kong. Why? Because the old men in Beijing "have a different set of values. Almost like alien beings."

It is easy to mock the pathetic facade of the stage-managed "election" that confirmed Beijing's choice of Tung. The "voters" mostly arrived in Rolls-Royces and Mercedes-Benzes (the

vehicles of choice for Hong Kong tycoons), the hall was decked out to look like Beijing's Great Hall of the Peoples, and the proceedings were conducted entirely in the Mandarin dialect (which most Hong Kongers do not understand). But David Chu has a point.

Hong Kong certainly needs somebody out front who can get through to the leadership in Beijing in a language they understand. They may have learned the rudiments of primitive slash-and-burn capitalism in China in the past 15 years, but the Communist rulers' grasp of subtler aspects of a healthy business environment — like, for example, the rule of law — is very feeble.

Hong Kong's relative immunity from tampering by Beijing, as laid down in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration that agreed on the colony's reversion to China, depends on its reputation as the golden eggs — and will now lay them for China. But the ham-fisted robber-baron of Beijing might easily kill the goose without meaning to, unless some influential Hong Kong leader can make them see that things like a free press, freedom to travel, and audited accounts are essential to its survival.

Tung is probably better equipped than most other people to explain the realities of Hong Kong to the "alien beings" in language they comprehend. His support for China's plan to dismantle the elected legislature after the take over and replace it with one stuffed with Beijing appointees (to be chosen by the same selection committee later this month) is distasteful, but Beijing was never going to allow genuine

democracy in Hong Kong anyway.

On balance, he is as good as Hong Kong as is likely to get — and all the current indicators say that it has recovered from last year's bout of nerves and is feeling pretty confident about the impending take over. Property values are up 20 per cent over last year, the stock market is booming, and fewer people are leaving.

So will it be all right, then? It is impossible to tell, because Hong Kong's future does not depend on who Beijing's administrator is, or even what happens in the city at all.

It depends on the inscrutable inner workings of a ruling caste in Beijing that is girding itself for a succession struggle. It is vulnerable to the hostility of the Shanghai clique, who want to win privileged status for their own city as China's premier financial and business centre and are strongly represented in the politburo.

It may not even be able to keep out the kickback-tycoons who have made fortunes in China by exploiting their official positions and now want to launder their money and turn it into hard currency. Those people usually have good connections high up in the army, and after next June 10,000 soldiers of the People's Liberation Army will be the final authority in the streets of Hong Kong.

In the long run China will almost certainly become a democratic country under the rule of law, and then Hong Kong will be all right too. But in the long run, as John Maynard Keynes observed, we are all dead. In the short run, Hong Kong is a dodgy bet.



# EU faces watershed year for economy and politics

By Jeremy Gaunt  
Reuters

BRUSSELS — A Christmas card from former Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens tells a tale about the European Union as it enters a watershed year for its politics and economy.

Featured on the front is a young, despondent woman, leaning on a bicycle with a flat tyre. She is apparently stuck somewhere near the Dutch town of Maastricht, where EU countries agreed a treaty in 1991 designed to bring them closer than ever before.

On the inside of the card, the woman is beaming. A man — Mr. Martens, actually, as it is his card — rushes to her rescue with a new wheel. It is a euro coin, the bloc's planned single currency due to start on Jan. 1, 1999.

The message is clear: Europe is in the doldrums, has not managed to move on much from Maastricht, but will soon be flying down the road to integration with its new currency.

Next year will be key for both the single currency and integration, with the EU planning to sign a new treaty in June and the bloc's members scrambling to get their economies in order, to qualify for the euro.

But it will be a year rife with problems for the 15 nations.

## Dublin summit met most targets

EU leaders — with the notable exception of Britain's John Major — are entering 1997 in a buoyant mood, their end-of-year summit in Dublin on Dec. 13 and 14 having achieved most of what they had hoped for.

Most significantly, the summit set up a blueprint for dealing with countries that belong to the single currency bloc, setting the ground rules for keeping government budgets in order.

They also skirted potentially debilitating rows and managed to issue citizenpleasing statements about the fights against crime and unemploy-



ment. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who is fond of metaphors about convoys and camel trains, said the EU caravan was now moving steadily on.

EU leaders recognise, however, that the journey is likely to be particularly hazardous next year.

## 1997 benchmark for single currency

First, there is the single currency.

Countries that want to qualify for the euro will have to get their accounts in order next year, as 1997 is the

benchmark year on which they will be judged. Deficits will have to be three per cent or less of gross domestic product and debt at or dropping towards 60 per cent of GDP.

With the exception of tiny Luxembourg, it is not turning out to be easy for any country, even mighty France and Germany.

Budget plans drafted for 1997 "nearly all" contain painful cuts that have already brought demonstrators onto the streets or caused shutdowns.

In Spain, plans to freeze public sector salaries led to a

strike in mid-December. Greek farmers have blockaded roads for weeks in protest against an end to tax breaks. There have also been anti-austerity protests in France, Germany and Italy.

No one but the cheeriest of optimists expects countries to succeed in cutting their deficits without labour unrest.

Memories are still fresh across the continent of the turmoil caused a year ago by French workers protesting Paris' austerity package. How France, in particular, fares in meeting the euro criteria will be a deciding factor in the project's success.

## New EU treaty talks volatile

Potentially even more volatile for the bloc are its ongoing negotiations on a new EU treaty, widely seen as an essential house-cleaning before a wave of new countries can join from Eastern and Central Europe.

At issue are plans to streamline the way the EU makes decisions, to prepare its institutions for 25 or so members, to fight crime and unemployment more efficiently, and to give the bloc a stronger voice in foreign policy.

The talks are meant to cul-

minate in June at a summit in Amsterdam, but many expect them to spill over into Luxembourg's presidency, which runs for the second six months of the year.

Although there are plenty of disagreements among EU countries, the main reason for the likely delay lies across the English channel in London, where Britain's ruling conservatives are deeply divided over relations with Europe.

## Britain the stumbling block

With sovereignty-conscious Britain opposed to nearly all

the major proposals being pushed by its partners in the treaty talks, few on the continent expect any real movement until after Britain's election, which must be held by May.

Even then, however, there is no guarantee that a new British government will be able to make the compromises needed.

Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo has worried aloud that if the election is fought with political parties vying to be seen as anti-Brussels, the winner will have little room to manoeuvre afterwards.

Fears that Britain, Denmark or other countries will stop the EU from integrating further have led France and Germany to propose that a new treaty contains what is known in EU jargon as a flexibility clause.

Simply put, this would allow groups of countries to move ahead without others, leading, if necessary, to a hard core EU with a looser outside.

The concern in many quarters is that such a process would destroy much of what the union has managed to agree.

It would not be a case of a flat tyre, the critics say, but of the entire wheel coming off.

## House endorses 1997 draft budget

(Continued from page 1)

budgets and the Kingdom's external balance of payment. The budget deficit was brought down to 4.6 per cent in 1996 from 20 per cent in 1989, and the expected deficit in 1997 is 3.9 per cent, and the goal is to make it two per cent by 2000. The programme also helped Jordan maintain an average growth of six per cent in the past five years.

The reform programme helped increase Jordan's foreign currency reserves to \$650 million from \$400 million at the start of 1996.

Inflation did not exceed the seven per cent mark in 1996 and is not expected to exceed four per cent in 1997.

"I do not agree with some deputies who believe that investments declined in 1996 because in accordance with official figures total investments in Jordan during 1996 were estimated to be worth JDI,717 million up from JDI,480 million in 1995," Mr. Kabariti told the House, reaffirming his government's commitment and determination to create the most opportune climate for investment in the country.

"In the course of implementing the reform programme the government is pursuing the goal of reducing the role of the public sector and boosting the activities of the private sector but this does not mean in any way that the government would shirk its responsibility towards protecting the public's interest through continued monitoring of the markets and preventing monopoly," said the prime minister.

"Once the privatisation of various government-owned institutions is completed, a draft law on preventing monopoly will be submitted to Parliament for examination and endorsement during the current session," he said.

The prime minister outlined the measures the government has undertaken and plans to undertake to help reduce poverty and unemployment and help raise the standard of living

through the "social safety net" that envisages spending JD400 million in six years:

— Restructuring of the National Aid Fund with a view to improving management and boosting programmes.

— Providing infrastructure for improving the conditions of the less developed sectors and underprivileged communities and plans for creating a special fund to finance income generating projects for them.

— Improving the efficiency of a system of providing direct aid and loans to the needy to help them start income generating projects.

— Creating a fund for training and rehabilitating the unemployed and the poor to help them find suitable employment.

The government has started creating a special fund for providing housing for civil servants in remote regions.

The government has drawn up a general strategy on agriculture which will be presented to the House for study. This strategy deals with such issues as production, marketing and exports and entails an agrarian reform programme aiming to help farmers to be compatible with the demands from the local and foreign markets.

The government has started restructuring the Agricultural Credit Corporation to ensure more favourable credit conditions for farmers.

The government, working through the Central Bank, has introduced new measures designed to raising the efficiency of commercial banks and giving them more freedoms.

The draft budget entails provisions for boosting the tourism sector by creating opportune climate for investment.

The government plans to submit to the House a draft budget on tourism which entails the creation of a special agency to stimulate the tourism industry.

The government has plans for creating industrial estates in all the governorates. It also plans for creating free trade zones where investors benefit from incentives and tax exemptions.

The government will seek to

cooperate with the creditors to reschedule Jordan's debts or to transform the debts into grants. It also plans to refrain from further borrowing.

The government is currently implementing a plan for reorganising the local labour market and has succeeded in creating 10,000 jobs for the job-seekers. It has opened the door for more trainees in vocational centres increasing the number by 20 per cent this year over that of 1995.

"Some deputies have expressed apprehension over the liberalisation of the national economy but I would like to reaffirm that the openness to the world economy is most beneficial to Jordan. The government seeks to conclude a partnership agreement with the European Union and to join the World Trade Organisation both of which will offer Jordan great opportunities for development and more opportunities for exporting its products," Mr. Kabariti said.

The government places health matters at the top of its list of priorities and the 1997 budget entails provisions for creating hospitals in Bani Kinana, Thiha, Wadi Musa and in the Irbid Governorate in addition to health centres and the expansion of existing hospitals.

The government is offering free medical treatment to the needy patients suffering from cancer, kidney trouble and other chronic diseases. The government has secured a \$11 million grant from Japan to purchase equipment for disposing waste water and a grant from international organisations to create a garbage dump in Ruseifa and \$1 million grant to improve the environment near the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company.

"The government is going ahead with plans to combat corruption, bribery and dereliction and waste of public funds and has laid down a tentative draft law to deal with economic crimes," the prime minister said.

## Damascus Declaration ministers meet in Cairo

(Continued from page 1)

any other people," he said. "It is time the Iraqi people return to the midst of Arab countries."

Another issue facing the ministers is the bitter Bahraini-Qatari dispute over the Hawar islands in the Gulf and a strip of land in Qatar known as the Zubara, which has historical significance to Bahrain's ruling Al Khalifa family (see page 12).

Sources told Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) that the officials also will reiterate their support for the Palestinian position regarding the Israeli troop redeployment in Hebron, the last West Bank city still under Israeli occupation and a key to unblocking the Middle East peace process.

The sources said the meeting will stress "peace as the Arab's strategic choice in the face of the Israeli haughtiness," MENA reported.

Egypt called on Iran Saturday to stop causing problems in the Gulf and voiced concern about security in the region.

"The Middle East already

has a lot of problems and all the countries in the region, including Iran, have to stop provoking problems or raising tensions," Foreign Minister Musa told reporters.

"All the countries in the region have to understand that there has to be an end to interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and they have to stop creating problems for their sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability," Mr. Musa said.

"In the end, we live in the same region and numerous ties exist between us. These ties have to be used in a positive and not negative way," the foreign minister said before the opening of a meeting of member countries of the Damascus Declaration.

Signed in 1991 after the Gulf war to facilitate economic and security cooperation between the Arab members of the U.S.-led coalition which drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait, the declaration has never been implemented.

Iran, which is not a member of the group, has a territorial dispute with the UAE about a chain of strategic

islands in the Gulf. Tehran is also accused by Bahrain of fomenting Shiite Muslim unrest within its borders.

The Damascus Declaration meets every six months to keep the alliance alive.

Mr. Nuaimi said the meeting would also discuss his country's dispute with Iran over three Gulf islands.

"Arab national security is suffering from two problems — the Israeli occupation of Arab territory and Iranian occupation of UAE territory," Mr. Nuaimi told reporters at Cairo airport.

"The declaration states...are always working to recover these lands and ensure Arab national security," he added.

Since the last Damascus Declaration meeting in Muscat in July, Gulf Arabs have again criticised Iran, while Iraq has reached agreement with the United Nations on limited Iraqi oil exports to pay for imports of food and medicine.

An annual Gulf summit in Doha this month called on Iran to leave the three Gulf islands claimed by the UAE and criticised Tehran's military development programme and deployment of surface-to-surface missiles.

## Peruvian official set up first direct contact

(Continued from page 1)

released all their hostages and laid down their arms.

Since storming the residence the rebels have released about 400 hostages, but negotiations seemed to be deadlocked after they freed only three more captives since a mass release last Sunday of 225 hostages.

Mr. Minnig has been playing the role of neutral mediator, shutting proposals and counterproposals between the government and the rebels since the standoff began 11 days ago when heavily armed rebels of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement

(MRTA) stormed the residence during a cocktail party.

Until Saturday, Mr. Palermo had received rebel proposals through Mr. Minnig at a command post set up just a few hundred metres from the residence in the elegant Lima neighbourhood of San Isidro.

Bishop Cipriani, of the ultraconservative Opus Dei Church Organisation and a close personal friend of Mr. Fujimori, has denied that he is acting in any sort of mediating capacity. His visit to the residence Saturday was the fourth in as many days.

## Israel to redeploy in Hebron

(Continued from page 1)

helicopter flight from the West Bank to Cairo for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Mr. Arafat will leave from Nablus aboard his helicopter for talks with Mr. Mubarak on the latest developments in peace talks with Israel, said Freih Abu Meddein, the PNA's justice minister.

"These meetings with Mr. Mubarak will include Mr. Arafat's recent talks with Mr. Netanyahu and the latest developments in the Middle East peace process," Mr. Abu Meddein said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Tunisia to strengthen ban on Islamists

TUNIS (R) — Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali on Saturday announced plans to introduce a constitutional ban on fundamentalist movements and extend use of plebiscites. "We intend to submit to the chamber of deputies a draft amendment to the constitution that will broaden the scope for recourse to referendums with respect to constitutional and legislative issues, and in domains that call for decisive choices," Mr. Ben Ali said at a special session of the parliament. "It will include...banishment of violence and extremism, and the principles that political parties may not be set up on racial, regional or religious bases," he added. The Tunisian government has refused to legalise the country's fundamentalist movement Nahdha, giving as its reason a 1988 law banning the political use of religion. But political analysts said that enshrining such a ban in the constitution would make it more difficult to reverse the law in the future. Next parliamentary and presidential elections are due in 1999. Municipal elections are due a year later.

### Avalanche kills 5 at Turkish resort

ISTANBUL (AFP) — An avalanche swept down slopes at the Palandoken ski resort Saturday, killing at least five people and injuring five others, the Anatolia news agency said. Rescue operations were underway in search of any other victims of the avalanche, the news agency said.

### Lebanon issues medal for 'Cana martyrs'

BEIRUT (AFP) — The central bank of Lebanon said Saturday it has issued a commemorative medal for the 105 civilian refugees who perished and the more than one hundred others wounded in the Israeli shelling of a U.N. base in the southern village of Cana last April. A bank source said revenues from the bronze medal, to be sold for 70,000 Lebanese pounds (\$45), will be granted to the families of the victims through the high relief committee. The medal, embossed with "in the memory of the martyrs of Cana," features a mother embracing her child amid a pile of bodies in front of a sun looming at the horizon beyond the Mediterranean sea. On the reverse side of the medal, with a 75 mm diameter, are written dates of several Israeli offensives against southern Lebanon and the southeastern western Bekaa Valley.

### Police arrest Pakistanis in Cyprus container

NICOSIA (R) — Police in northern Cyprus said on Friday they arrested 47 Pakistani illegal immigrants packed inside a container on a truck about to board a ferry for Turkey. The Pakistanis were discovered after passers-by heard them banging on the sides of the container in the port town of Famagusta as they panicked due to the lack of air inside, police said. The men told police they had been working in northern Cyprus and had each paid \$100 for the passage to Turkey. A court in the self-declared Turkish republic of northern Cyprus ordered the group to be detained for three months. No one else has been arrested in connection with the case so far.

## Egypt says economy growing at 5.7 per cent

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has said its economy was growing at 5.7 per cent this fiscal year which started on July 1 and would grow at 6.2 per cent in 1997/98.

The estimate was the highest yet for this year, for which the Central Bank of Egypt had previously forecast five per cent growth, up from 4.9 per cent in 1995/96.

Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri gave the figures in a 90-minute statement to parliament on his government's economic achievements and future policies.

"In the first year of the next five-year plan, 1997/98, the target for investment will be 60 billion pounds (\$17.6 billion) and for real growth in gross domestic product (GDP) 6.2 per cent, about half a percentage point more than this year, which is 5.7 per cent," he said.

Dr. Ganzouri said that in the five years of the next plan the target for average GDP growth would be seven per cent a year.

The plan should create 2.5 million new jobs over the five-year period, starting with 500,000 in 1997/98, he added.

The Egyptian labour

force is growing at about 500,000 a year and the government says the economy has been absorbing the increase. It says unemployment even fell in 1995/96, to 9.4 per cent of the workforce from 9.6 per cent in the previous year.

Egypt, Dr. Ganzouri said, would need to invest an average of 100 billion pounds a year over the next 20 years and the government's share of this would be about 20 per cent.

Total investment in the period 1997-2002, the period of the plan, should be 375 billion pounds, he added.

The prime minister did not say where the unexpected growth came from this year but tourism is booming, harvests have been good, oil prices have been high and much capital has flowed into the country through both direct and portfolio investments.

He extended this fiscal year's "no new taxes" pledge into 1997/98 but added that the government would be reviewing policies on education and health.

The thrust of the review would be: "How can we make these services better?"

How can they cost less and how can they be more effective?" he said.

Dr. Ganzouri again said the government was committed to the Toshka scheme — a massive project to irrigate at least 500,000 acres (200,000 hectares) in the Western Desert with water diverted from behind the Aswan High Dam.

The government has already started digging a canal north from the Toshka depression, where surplus water from the High Dam Lake has been accumulating.

The prime minister said the population pressures in the Nile Valley, where about 60 million people live on only four per cent of Egypt's total area, were becoming intolerable.

"Look and you will see the signs of social violence in recent decades. One of the reasons is the overcrowding. It's a social matter as well as an economic matter," he said.

"Can we stay where we are? I believe that we have no choice but to move out of the valley," Dr. Ganzouri added.

## Arab Gulf countries seek EU investment to diversify economy

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states have told their main economic partner, the European Union (EU), that they need more investment as they pursue reforms to diversify their oil-reliant economies, officials have said.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries said EU capital flow into their industrial sector was vital for their attempts to ease reliance on volatile oil earnings given their limited farming and tourism potential.

Investment is on the top of the agenda drawn up by the two sides at a meeting of their economy and finance officials in Brussels last week.

The agenda covers numerous issues related to cooperation and it will be discussed by the GCC and the EU foreign ministers in Doha on Feb. 17," said a United Arab Emirates (UAE) official, who attended the Brussels talks.

"Investment is one of the key issues, given its significance in development in the GCC countries. We have drawn up guidelines for such a sector."

The Doha talks are part of a series of meetings between the foreign ministers in the

two blocs aimed at strengthening cooperation and ironing out differences over the proposed free trade agreement.

The two sides signed an economic pact in 1988 to boost investment and help GCC states acquire technology but officials said capital inflow remained weak.

They attributed this to the EU reluctance to pump large investment into the region on the grounds it is a relatively small market and economic laws need to be improved as most members still impose restrictions on foreign capital.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and the UAE — are particularly seeking technology for heavy industries which they believe could diversify their economies and minimise the impact of fluctuating oil prices.

The six members, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's proven crude

reserves, have invested more than \$50 billion into manufacturing but their industries remained confined to light products.

GCC officials argue the EU should deal with them on a reciprocal basis as they are major investors in Europe. Independent estimates showed more than half the GCC's overseas assets of over \$500 billion are based in the EU.

The GCC also supplies nearly one third of its total oil production to the Europeans who are the top commercial partners of the 15-year-old Gulf alliance. Their two-way trade stood at around \$35 billion in 1995.

The partnership is set to grow in the near future as the two sides have reached an agreement in principle for Gulf gas supplies to the EU.

It will be the first time that Gulf states export natural gas to Europe as it gets most of its needs from Russia and

Algeria.

According to the UAE Al Bayan newspaper, the Doha meeting would cover possible signing of investment protection and avoidance of double taxation agreements between the two sides to encourage the flow of capital.

"The two sides will discuss such agreements, which could be signed individually between the EU and each of the GCC member states," it said.

"Gulf states believe investment will further strengthen relations with the EU and lead to a more stable economic links between the two sides."

It said the GCC and the EU foreign ministers would also discuss progress made in the eight-year negotiations for a free trade pact which could open up European markets for Gulf petrochemicals and other exports.

## HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Go wherever you can gain more modern ideas today which can help you to advance in your career activities. Prepare for a possible trip which you have put off for some time and you will enjoy yourself, especially with loved ones.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Your mate wants a different kind of recreation today, however, don't say no until you first study it thoroughly. It may be too expensive for this time and you could but your money to better uses in the days ahead.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Some unusual event occurs today which requires a change of plans, however, go along with it quickly, because if you delay you could find yourself behind the eight ball. Later this evening you can relax at home with your mate.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Study into new methods of operation today which can improve your daily routines and make you more successful in the days ahead. Later this evening will be a good time for you to go out of town with close friends and have fun.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You have fine ideas for recreational activities with your friends in the days ahead, so proceed full steam ahead, make a note of them so you don't forget what your method of operation will be and make this time unforgettable.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You may find it necessary to bring a guest home in the evening, however, make the best of this situation, since this individual will be a good business contact for you to be successful. This can prove very interesting.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 23) You can make important visits in the evening to recreational activities which you can have an enjoyable time. Be sure to dress nicely and show your finest manners with others, since you could make some good contacts there.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Do whatever you have agreed to do today with others and you can have a wonderful time together. Sit down with a good financial advisor secretly, since any information which gets out could be disastrous to your career.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Contact outside fellow associates and get your heads together today and you will be able to come up with some good ideas for completing any career activities. This can bring greater success in the days ahead.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Have a discussion with fellow associates for better accord in the days ahead. Improve your love life tonight and you will notice an increase in the attention and romance level produced by your mate and thereby enjoy each other much more.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Set up appointments for recreation with good friends today and later this evening enjoy their company. Be happy with your loved ones and show that you do appreciate them being in your life through some special token of affection.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You can be very active at home today, however, later tonight attend a party with your mate which you have been looking forward to and make this time quite romantic. Later tonight you can meet with close friends for some fun.

**Birthstone of December:** Turquoise — Zircon.

## Japan seen staging economic comeback by '98

PARIS (AFP) — Japan's long-awaited economic recovery from a three-year downturn should reaccelerate over the next 12 months and produce renewed brisk, inflation-free growth by 1998, the OECD has said.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said the economy would be helped importantly by the impact of the yen's sharp depreciation since 1993 and by the effect of over a year of easy monetary policy.

The OECD in its half-yearly Economic Outlook estimated growth in the Japanese economy to have reached 3.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year, despite a sharp second half slowdown.

With activity now set to pick up, a relatively low rate of 1.6 per cent was likely for next year, but this should be

followed by 3.7 per cent in 1998, more than one percentage point higher than the projected Group of Seven (G-7) average, it said.

The OECD said the weaker yen was among key forces sustaining the upswing, with the currency's value down by 30 per cent from its peak level against the U.S. dollar as of last month.

The recovery, which began in the second half of 1995, received a sharp boost in the first half of this year, when public sector demand jumped by 13 per cent and domestic demand benefited from investment by large firms, enjoying growing profits, and brisk growth in private consumption.

As a result, GDP growth ran at an annual rate of nearly 6.5 per cent in the first six months, but lost momentum in the second half when public investment declined

sharply with the end of the fiscal stimulus.

The OECD said "there may have been a slight drop in GDP" in this period, tentatively estimated at 1.2 per cent at annual rate.

Following successive fiscal packages to stimulate activity over the past several years, the general government deficit topped an estimated four per cent of GDP this year, with a central and local government shortfall of nearly seven per cent.

The OECD said the government's plan for action to curb the runaway deficit had already brought a marked tightening of fiscal policy since the autumn, with more to come over the next year.

In the view of the OECD secretariat, the envisaged measures should reduce the structural components of the general government deficit by nearly two per cent of

GDP to only one per cent of GDP in 1997, which meant that the actual deficit could be cut to 2.25 per cent of GDP by 1998.

The combined central and local government deficit would, on this assumption, come down from seven per cent to close to 4.5 per cent of GDP.

The OECD recognised that the government's planned moves could have an initial dampening effect on demand next year, but said increases in personal incomes, a slower rise in import prices and continued good growth in business investment should help offset this.

The drag on activity from the external sector might also be reversed by the end of the year, with Japan's current account surplus stabilising at about 1.5 per cent of GDP, it also said.

With unemployment projected to decline only slightly from its historic peak of 3.5 per cent to some 3.1 per cent in 1998, prices would remain depressed, despite next year's planned increase in the consumption tax.

## REUTERS REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NHG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5547	0.5908	1.3470	115.45	1.3675	1629.00	1.7452	6.2425
DE Mark	0.6432	1.0000	0.3756	0.8663	74.26	0.6793	936.15	1.1222	3.5722
GB Sterling	1.6825	2.6305	1.0000	2.2793	194.94	2.3145	2887.83	2.9539	8.8729
CHF Franc	0.7424	1.1538	0.4382	1.0000	89.71	1.0148	134.69	1.2951	3.5805
JP Yen	0.0087	1.3455	0.5110	1.1657	1.0000	1.7835	13.23	151.03	4.5370
CAD Dollar	0.7313	1.1408	0.4294	0.9793	1.18	1.0000	1121.87	1.2007	3.2555
IT Lira	0.0007	1.0161	0.3859	0.8880	1326.08	0.8938	1.0000	11.41	3.4265
NL Guilder	0.5730	0.8905	0.3383	0.7717	66.12	0.7834	875.87	1.0000	3.0031
FR Franc	0.1907	0.2964	0.1126	0.25792	22.00	0.2807	33.27	33.2700	1.0000

Energy		
Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	24.15	24.25
WTI	25.15	25.05
Bony	24.15	24.25
Dubai	21.25	21.40
UL Gas	214.00	213.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4147	0.15754	0.3593	30.81
AE Dirham	0.2725	0.42376	0.16099	0.36718	31.4552
KW Dinar	1.3358	1.98772	1.57083	4.49438	385.359
BR Dinar	0.3770	4.12541	1.56716	3.57498	306.466
CY Pound	2.1216	3.2985	1.2528	2.8578	244.339

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	389.25	389.75
Silver (oz's)	4.99	4.91
Platinum (oz's)	370	371
AL (3 Months)	1545	1548
CU (3 Months)	2125	2130
Zinc (3 Months)	1075	1078
Lead (3 Months)	712	716
Ni (3 Months)	6470	6500

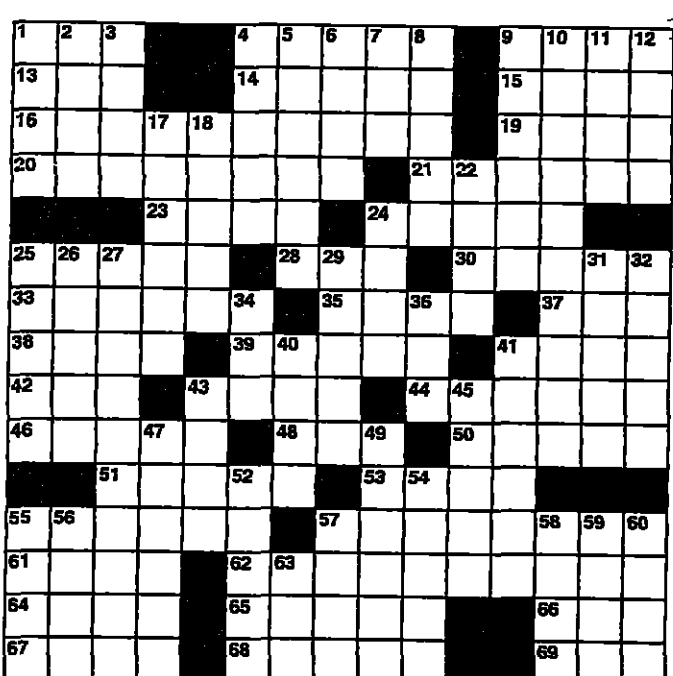
Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)						
Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-9-	-12-	Year
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.56	5.50	5.50	5.59	5.68	
GBP	8.18	8.25	8.44	8.52	8.75	
JPY	0.31	0.31	0.38	0.33	0.38	
DEM	2.87	2.87	2.94	2.94	3.00	
FRF	3.34	3.28	3.40	3.28	3.46	
CHF	7.87	7.81	7.94	7.75	7.81	
ITL	7.43	7.20	6.86	6.58	6.50	

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	6560.91	14.23	0.22	6576.28	6537.46
New York	S&P 500	756.79	0.97	0.13	758.75	754.82
London	FT-SE 100	4091	-1.5	-0.04	4102.9	4083.6
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	19369.04	77.46	0.4	19423.6	19161.1
Paris	CAC 40	2306.95	3.2	0.14	2312.18	2291.37
Frankfurt	DAX	2852.88	7.31	0.26	2857.31	2852.73

## THE Daily Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Salt
- 4 Haggard
- 9 Roman date
- 13 Baseball stat
- 14 —, and sometimes y
- 15 Bog
- 16 Defected
- 19 Exam for juniors: abbr.
- 20 Convert into soap
- 21 Ibsen play
- 23 Ancient Italian city
- 24 Rib
- 25 Chaplain
- 28 Wade adversary
- 30 Succinct
- 33 Decrees
- 35 "Behold a — horse"
- 37 — populi
- 38 Ascend
- 39 Motif
- 41 Actress Merrill
- 42 Physician, informally
- 43 Cloth worker
- 44 Medicinal shrub
- 46 Theater employee
- 48 Test bldg.
- 50 On the qui vive
- 51 Modify
- 53 Swiss river
- 55 Balkan region
- 57 Hermits
- 61 Patti of music
- 62 Conflict of opinion
- 64 Consumer
- 65 Irritated
- 66 Sp. aunt
- 67 Beatty-Keaton movie
- 68 Takes it easy
- 69 Certain painting



by James L. Beatty

ALAS	PECOS	RAPT
SILL	EXILE	ELIE
TODO	TUNER	COLA
INAWORLD	DOFF	FOOLS
STROLL	OPAL	RINSE
LOOK	HAVEN	LAM
INTELLIGENT	CELSA	
DYE	EIDER	MEIR
OGEE	ARENAS	
AMINO	TENOR	
FATEFUL	HANDICAP	
TRET	SERGE	TARO
ELMO	ENOLA	URGE
ROSA	DOWEL	SPOT

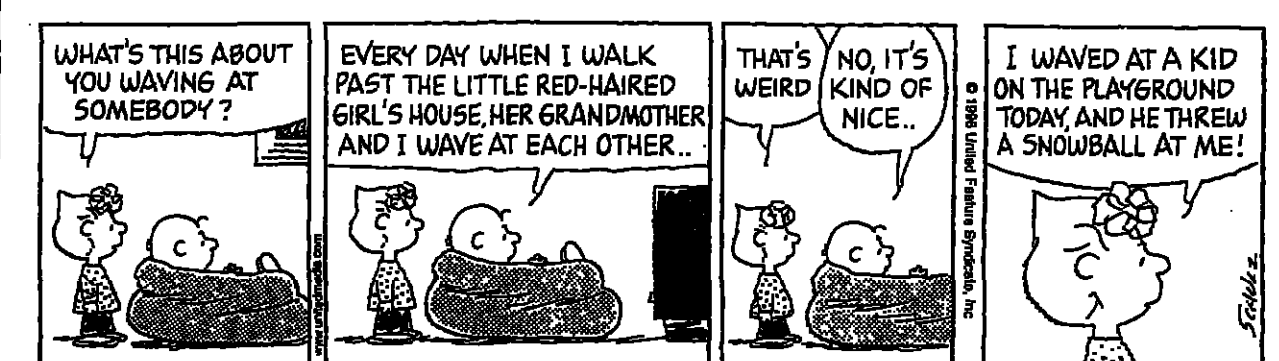
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- ### DOWN
- 1 Turner and Koppel
  - 2 Opera highlight
  - 3 Coarse file
  - 4 Lifeboat crane
  - 5 Short coat

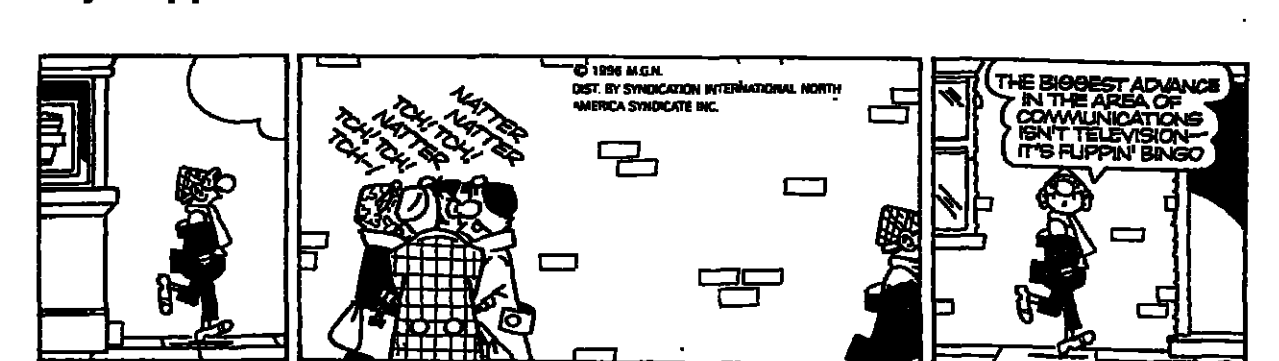
- 6 Sprightly
- 7 Anguish
- 8 Jostle
- 9 Take unfair advantage
- 10 Harmful action
- 11 Part of O.E.F.
- 12 Congeals
- 17 Compel
- 18 Start
- 22 Strong emotion
- 24 Astros, e.g.
- 25 Hidden
- 26 Ta-ta in Toledo
- 27 Fired
- 29 Verdi composition
- 31 Sub detector
- 32 Precise
- 34 Filthy abode
- 36 Flower necklace
- 40 Retained
- 41 Strike out
- 43 German number
- 45 Curtailed
- 47 Fire remains
- 49 Hunting dog

- 52 Lowest point
- 54 Citric and acetic
- 55 Goad
- 56 Alloy
- 57 Inquires
- 58 Division word
- 59 202
- 60 Signet
- 63 Wrath

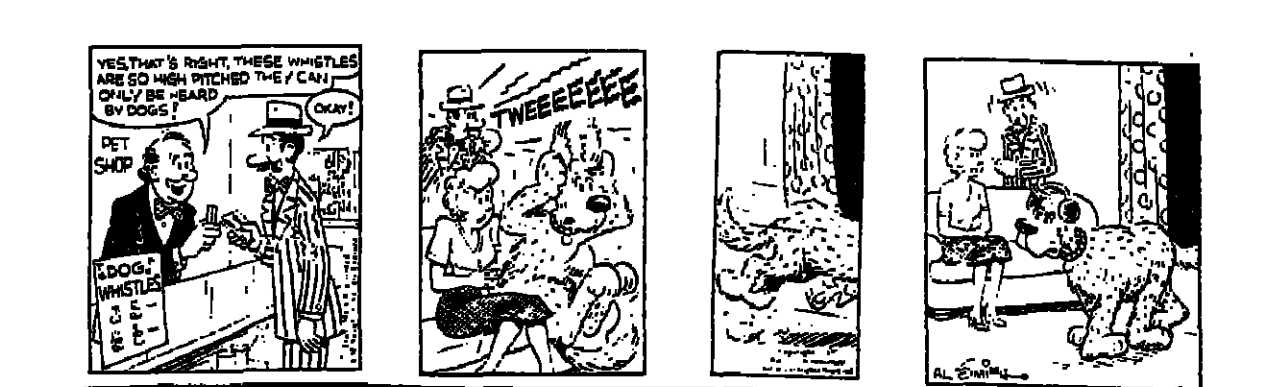
## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff





## Consumers and traders give conflicting views on prices of car spare parts

By Shehab Makahleh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Consumers complain that car spare parts are expensive but traders insist that prices are declining despite being internationally high.

Consumers base their frustration on the fact that customers have been reduced on car spare parts but they still do not feel any concrete change or decline as prices are still the same or sometimes even higher.

Rashad Rashad, a mechanic and trader of spare parts, denies any increase in the prices of spares and points out that prices have declined due to the recession in the market and the drop in the purchasing power. He also mentions the stiff competition among spare parts traders who, by flooding the market with spares, have caused prices to plummet.

Mr. Rashad asserts that low incomes and the declining purchasing power are actually making prices of spares unacceptable to consumers by indicating that the Association of Car Dealers and Traders of Spare Parts and the Ministry of Supply had investigated some complaints of price irregularities but none could be verified.

Mohammad Al Kouz, a spare parts agent, said: "We have been selling spare parts for this year at prices even lower than the ceiling fixed by the ministry and the association due to the low demand and the recession in the spares market."

Mr. Kouz attributed the low demand and recession to the "burnt market" or Al Souq Al Mahrouq which has emerged when merchants flooded the market with spare-parts and sold them at low prices in order to raise badly needed cash.

Mahdi Kheir, an employee, told the Jordan Times that he had to pay JD30 only to change the fan belt, the sparkles (glitters) and the motor oil and to fill the radiator with high quality anti-freeze material. "This is higher than any time before," he said, urging the ministry and the association to fix prices.

Thamer Saleh, a banker, said he was shocked to find that the cost of the headlights for his 1979 model car was JD 120. He added that he used to purchase the same headlights for JD80 in the past few years.

"I wonder what it would cost to fix a new motor?" Mr. Saleh exclaimed.

## Oil traders see boom extending into 1997

LONDON (R) — Oil traders look set for another boom year in 1997 but the big banks may not find their financial muscle alone enough to reap the rewards of a famously complex market.

Oil trading companies in 1996 have enjoyed one of their best years in a decade helped by wild price swings and the highest prices in six years.

Windfalls profits have also accrued to some oil refiners and trading houses who specialise in supplying cargoes to more remote destinations.

But the big banks who tend to trade forward "paper" oil have had a rougher ride trying to adapt the trading techniques of Wall Street to oil, the "Wild West" of financial markets.

Some, like Morgan Stanley and Bankers Trust, had very good years in oil but others were forced to bite the bullet. Lehman Brothers quit the oil market last month and traders say Goldman Sachs' and Merrill Lynch's oil trading arms have sharply reduced trading activity.

"It's disappointing to lose anyone from the market, particularly when the outlook is pretty good," said Scott Carter, senior oil trader at Tosco Corp's London office.

"Refiners mostly had a good year with improved margins, despite the shake out of some overcapacity," he said.

The price of North Sea Brent blend crude, the world benchmark, is some 30 per cent above year ago levels and since then has averaged nearly 35 per cent volatility using a 14-day measure.

This compares with volatility around eight per cent in foreign exchange, 11 per cent on leading stock market indexes and around 11 per cent in United States bond markets.

Brent even topped volatility in the copper market where prices slumped 35 per cent after the Sumitomo scandal.

Many traders confidently expect oil markets in 1997 to be even more choppy.

Bullish pressures include the possibility of a big winter freeze in the oil-hungry West, growing world demand and low oil stocks. In the bearish camp are the resumption of Iraqi oil sales for the first time in six years, substitution of oil usage by gas and rising non-OPEC supplies.

Adding spice to the mix are uncertainties that promise big mismatches in supply and demand.

Tougher environmental rules in the West, big changes in the Russian oil industry and different rates of oil demand growth have already kicked prices around in recent years.

Ironically, one of the few stabilising forces next year may be the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) which has managed to keep its head down recently after many years of squabbling over oil production quotas.

The oil group, which shook oil markets to the core in the 1970s and 1980s, agreed last month to keep quotas unchanged until June next year.

But despite OPEC's best efforts to steer an even course, the oil market is likely to remain inherently unstable for the foreseeable future.

It is uniquely sensitivity to world political events and prices mostly hinge on highly leveraged trading of cargoes that trigger big moves.

Banks have found the promise of volatile oil prices too tempting to resist in recent years. But they attracted only modest demand for their risk management services, and many have struggled ever since.

Oil traders who move cargoes of oil around the world get huge benefit from the flow of information they get back from the physical market. Most importantly, they can quickly identify changes in supply and demand, an insight that can elude banks trading only in "paper" oil.

Without that information, banks are left to rely on past oil prices moves, rather than looking forward. Such a profound difference in perspective may be critical in how banks perform over the next few years.

"Only looking backwards is a bit like trading with blinkers on," said Mr. Carter. Historical oil price relationships break down and reform rapidly as the underlying physical market changes. Experience of the cargo market is seen invaluable, a fact that has not escaped the more successful banks in the sector.

"We have around 30 years experience on the desk," said Nigel Supera, managing director of the oil trading division at Bankers Trust International in London.

Morgan Stanley also has traders with a wide range of experience of trading cargoes.

Although 20 to 30 smaller oil trading companies went to the wall since the champagne days of the 1980s their role has evolved and been better defined in recent years.

Many now prefer work with smaller out-of-the-way countries outside the core range of multinationals like Shell or British Petroleum.


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AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN											
QUOTED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 28/12/1996											
											
PAGE	12	MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / S	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE
HIGH	LOW					TRANS.	SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE	
259.500	205.000		ARAB BANK	13.7	1.40	22	3660	919020	249.00	250.00	1.00+
5.000	4.250		CAYRO AMMAN BANK	10.3	0.00	4	2000	10228	5.00	5.00	0.00
1.900	1.900		BANK OF JORDAN	11.9	0.00	8	2601	8256	1.90	1.90	0.00
1.250	1.250		MID. EAST INV. BK.	69.6	0.00	87	109775	115802	1.01	1.06	0.05+
2.100	2.100		INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.1	6.27	4	30500	61110	2.10	2.22	0.03+
1.250	1.250		THE HOUSING BK.	12.4	2.97	2	1100	5115	4.70	4.65	0.05-
1.040	1.040		JOR. KIWAT BANK	20.6	0.00	59	100593	284842	2.80	2.84	0.04+
1.110	1.110		JOR. GULF BANK	5.8	7.22	6	4750	4608	1.96	1.97	0.01+
3.850	3.850		ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	19.8	0.00	1	1300	4810	3.60	3.70	0.10+
4.180	4.180		JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.7	0.00	5	577	2109	3.60	3.69	0.09+
3.800	3.800		JOR. INV. FID. BANK	19.5	0.00	1	100000	360000	3.60	3.60	0.00
1.240	1.240		BEIT AL-HOL (BEITTA)	1.1	8.15	1	184	176	1.76	1.82	0.06+
1.530	1.530		PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	13	15400	19637	1.28	1.27	0.01-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 191.62 %CHG: +0.46 213 372356 1801820											
2.830	1.830		JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.5	10.31	1	100	194	1.95	1.94	0.01-
3.600	3.700		ALFARER AL-ARAB	15.0	3.40	8	6791	39742	5.60	5.68	0.08+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 118.77 %CHG: +0.61 9 6891 39936											
1.830	1.450		JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	13.3	7.36	11	2550	4176	1.64	1.63	0.01-
9.250	7.800		JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	17.0	2.08	1	250	1975	7.80	7.90	0.10+
1.650	1.200		ARAB POTASH CO.	19.4	0.00	2	970	970	1.65	1.65	0.00
2.800	2.090		SHIPPING LINES	11.2	7.55	1	250	663	2.60	2.65	0.05+
1.830	1.080		NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	16	7050	8436	1.20	1.19	0.01-
1.050	1.050		REAL ESTATE INV.	19.4	4.33	4	5000	4300	1.02	1.02	0.00
1.260	1.580		JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	39.0	0.00	26	10450	7880	1.76	1.76	0.00
2.300	1.490		MID. EAST HOTELS	72.4	0.00	4	2500	4855	1.65	1.68	0.03+
1.350	1.860		SARJA EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	3700	2925	1.04	1.07	0.03+
2.310	1.690		UNIFIED CO.	10.9	4.81	41	14300	29936	2.06	2.08	0.02+
1.200	1.920		UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	3	274	242	1.85	1.89	0.04+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.79 %CHG: +1.73 113 46924 67356											
1.740	3.080		JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.3	2.97	2	200150	674506	3.40	3.37	0.03-
3.550	2.710		JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	36.0	0.00	2	250	838	3.22	3.35	0.13+
6.000	4.950		ARAB POTASH CO.	17.3	3.51	2	250	1433	5.75	5.70	0.05-
10.450	8.720		JOR. PETROL REFINERY	9.8	8.25	15	2025	19669	9.65	9.70	0.05+
1.590	1.150		WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	56.0	0.00	1	50	63	1.26	1.26	0.00
2.750	1.650		INDUSTRIAL CORN. AG.	36.0	0.00	15	3375	8872	2.61	2.68	0.07+
3.040	1.730		ARAB PHARM. CO.	19.7	0.00	10	3750	13492	3.60	3.60	0.00
6.450	5.650		JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.4	4.20	2	107	637	6.10	5.95	0.15-
3.310	2.500		GENERAL MINING	6.7	11.45	3	750	1965	2.50	2.62	0.12+
7.800	4.250		DAR ALAMANA DIV. INV.	13.5	0.00	16	5850	29138	4.90	4.95	0.05+
5.800	3.130		ARAB ALUM. IND.	9.3	7.98	4	1700	6392	3.75	3.76	0.01+
1.960	1.050		LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	10	7000	4340	1.63	1.62	0.01-
1.460	1.080		ARAB PAPER CORP. TRD.	7.7	9.08	12	3650	4182	1.14	1.14	0.00
1.560	1.540		NATIONAL TIRE	10.8	0.00	48	44500	32124	1.71	1.73	0.02+
1.730	1.930		INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	10	3150	3420	1.09	1.07	0.02-
4.510	3.430		ALADDIS CO.	21.8	1.08	1	300	1170	3.80	3.90	0.10+
1.350	1.350		JOR. WOOD IND. JWCIO	19.1	1.87	2	300	1605	5.15	5.15	0.00
1.330	1.670		JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	3	1600	1368	1.84	1.86	0.02+
1.850	1.080		ARAB PHARM. CO.	26.8	0.00	5	2500	3603	1.45	1.43	0.02-
1.260	1.440		TRIV. MCD. IND.	5.4	11.30	13	4200	7487	1.71	1.77	0.06+
2.080	1.140		JOR. IND. RESOURCES	15.1	0.00	8	3400	4352	1.28	1.28	0.00
1.500	1.860		JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	25.8	0.00	20	17100	16245	1.96	1.95	0.01-
1.430	1.080		INTL. TOBACCO	30.8	0.00	29	17500	22730	1.31	1.31	0.00
1.650	1.930		UNION CH. & VEG.	23.9	0.00	3	700	679	1.97	1.97	0.00
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.17 %CHG: +0.03 237 323986 860422											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 151.72 %CHG: +0.37 572 750159 2769534											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 28/12/1996											
1.790	1.440		CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	20.9	0.00	5	4950	2634	1.52	1.52	0.00
1.800	1.510		JOR. TRADE FAC.	13.9	0.00	12	6600	1432	1.52	1.52	0.00
1.500	1.050		ZARA FOR INVESTMENT	29.1	0.00	1	1000	1470	1.40	1.47	0.07+
1.890	1.700		UNION INV. 50%	69.8	0.00	4	1100	253	1.73	1.73	0.00
1.060	1.370		ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	5	1360	601	1.42	1.44	0.01+
1.950	1.690		AL-BANILYAR 75%	15.6	0.00	12	17135	7544	1.69	1.69	0.00
1.640	1.340		JOR. IND. RATCH-JENCO	9	0.00	5	3350	1106	1.34	1.33	0.01-
1.800	1.440		ARAB FOOD & MCD.	9	0.00	13	14000	8846	1.63	1.63	0.00
1.760	1.300		NATL. CHLORINE	2	0.00	13	13875	18417	1.36	1.36	0.00
1.690	1.450		ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	3	1750	837	1.47	1.47	0.00
1.920	1.520		NATL. MCD. IND. JWCIO	2	0.00	2	650	371	1.52	1.52	0.00
1.030	1.400		NATL. MCD. IND. JWCIO	2	0.00	20	33650	15816	1.47	1.47	0.00
1.760	1.430		KAYAK DIES & MOULDS	9	0.00	1	200	96	1.48	1.48	0.00
1.010	1.720		JOR. WOOD IND. JWCIO	19.1	1.87	2	300	1605	5.15	5.15	0.00
1.740	1.430		ARAB ELECT. IND.	9	0.00	1	1500	750	1.50	1.50	0.00
1.810	1.370		RAT. PHARM. 65%	2	0.00	3	2250	563	1.59	1.60	0.01+
1.810	1.390		IND. ENG.	25.3	0.00	2	1000	820	1.41	1.41	0.00
1.430	1.760		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	2	1000	790	1.79	1.79	0.00
1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00
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1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00
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1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00
1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00
1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00
1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00
1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00
1.850	1.		IND. CERAMIC	2	0.00	16	13500	8904	1.73	1.73	0.00



# Gill leads Nets past Pacers

East Rutherford, New Jersey (R) — Kendall Gill poured in 31 points and Robert Pack added 22 points and 13 assists as the New Jersey Nets pulled out a 105-94 win over the Indiana Pacers Friday in the opener of a home-and-home series.

Shawn Bradley had 19 points, 10 rebounds and nine blocked shots for New Jersey, which had lost two straight and seven of its previous eight games. The Nets have won four of the last five meetings with Indiana.

"We played well as a team tonight," said Pack. "We really had the tempo in our favour. I'm settling in here, my teammates are getting used to me. If we keep playing well as a team, we should win more games."

Antonio Davis netted a season-high 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds and Travis Best had 20 points for Indiana, which had won five of its previous six games and three in a row on the road. The Pacers get a rematch on Sunday at home.

"They outplayed us tonight, you have to give them credit," said Indiana coach Larry Brown. "I can't see one position that we beat them at tonight."

"The point of it all is who wanted it the most," said New Jersey coach John Calipari.

New Jersey lost to Toronto while Indiana beat Detroit the night before.

"We had a chance to win it, especially in the fourth quarter when we took the lead," Brown said. "It was silly mistakes. They were coming off a disappointing loss and we were coming off an emotional win. I guess that you can say we were ready for a letdown and they wanted to bounce back from the loss."

"Reggie Miller scored 15 points for Indiana, which shot just 39 per cent (28-of-71) from the field and was outscored 43-38."

In Charlotte, Tim Hardaway scored 26 points as the Miami Heat extended their franchise-record road winning streak to 13 games with a 101-86 victory over the Hornets.

Voshon Lenard added 19 points for the Heat, who have the league's best road record at 15-2.

Miami moved into a tie for third place for the longest road winning streak in NBA history, matching the 1964-65 Boston Celtics. The Los Angeles Lakers won 16 straight road games in 1971-72, while the Utah Jazz had 15 consecutive road wins in 1994-95.

Dell Curry scored 23 points and Glen Rice added 18 for Charlotte, which has lost three straight to the Heat.

At Washington, Chris Webber scored 25 points and Juwan Howard added 21 as the Bulls defeated the Toronto Raptors 100-82 to climb over the .500 mark for the first time in more than a month.

Webber also grabbed 13 rebounds, while Howard hauled in 11 and handed out eight assists for Washington (14-13), which was 7-6 on Nov. 25.

Doug Christie had 20 points and eight assists, while Walt Williams and Damon Stoudamire each added 16 points for Toronto, which lost for the seventh time in 10 games.

In Cleveland, Terrell Brandon had 30 points and 11 assists and Chris Mills added 21 points and seven rebounds as the Cavaliers used a big fourth-quarter run to defeat the Milwaukee Bucks 94-86.

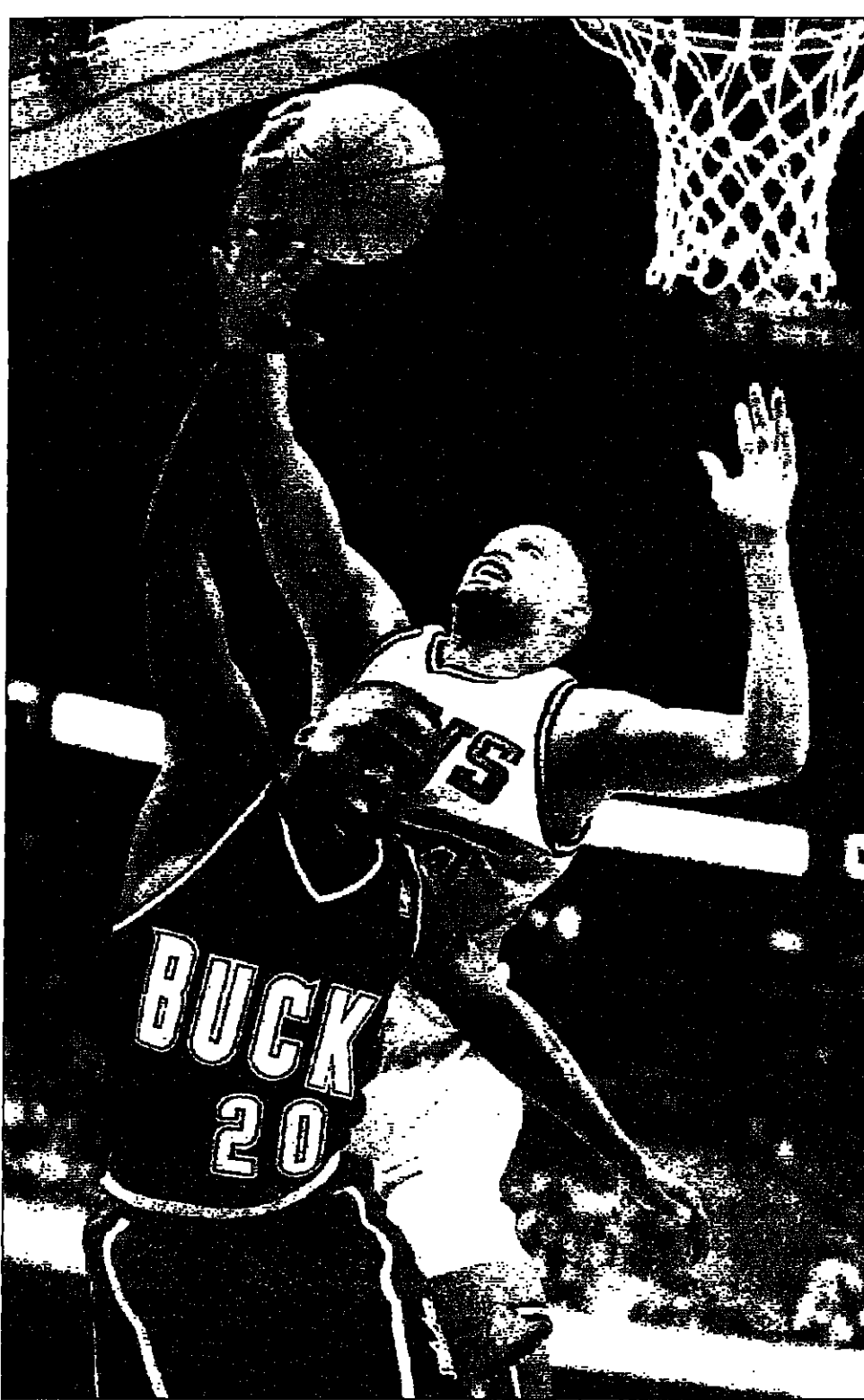
Danny Ferry, who had 15 points, made a three-pointer to trigger an 11-0 spurt that put the Cavaliers ahead for good.

Cleveland went more than five minutes without a field goal before Ferry's shot cut the deficit to 84-81 with 4:53 remaining.

In Los Angeles, Kenny Anderson scored 25 points, including a go-ahead three-point play with 27 seconds left, as the Portland Trail Blazers snapped a three-game losing streak with a 102-98 victory over the Clippers.

Isaiah Rider added 20 points and Clifford Robinson 19 for Portland.

Rodney Rogers scored 25 points — two off his career high — before leaving with a twisted neck with 7:30



Cleveland Cavaliers Chris Mills (right) pulls down a rebound over the top of Milwaukee Bucks Sherman Douglas during the first quarter at Gund Arena in Cleveland. Cleveland defeated Milwaukee 94-86 (Reuters photo)

left, in the fourth quarter. Loy Vaught and rookie Lorenzen Wright each added 16 for the Clippers, who lost their fifth straight.

In Inglewood, California, Shaquille O'Neal had 25 points and 11 rebounds and Byron Scott scored seven of his 12 points in the final four minutes as the Los

Angeles Lakers defeated the slumping Boston Celtics 109-102.

Eddie Jones added 17 points and Elden Campbell had 14 points and 11 rebounds. Rookie Derek Fisher scored 13 off the bench, highlighted by a four-point play, as the Lakers won their seventh

straight home game and pulled back into a first-place tie with Seattle in the Pacific Division. The Lakers have won eight of their last 10 games and avenged a 110-94 loss at Boston Nov. 27. The Celtics lost their seventh straight and remained the only NBA team without a road victory.

## Cyprus internationals in World Cup betting scandal

NICOSIA (AFP) — The Cyprus Football Association (CFA) is conducting an investigation into newspaper reports that national team players bet against their own side in a recent World Cup qualifier.

A CFA enquiry is underway into allegations that an unspecified number of international players placed bets on Bulgaria to beat Cyprus on Dec. 14.

"We are investigating the whole matter and collecting information but we are not saying we suspect anyone," CFA President Marios Lefkariitis said Friday.

He said the CFA would not bow to media pressure but at the same time would not sweep the issue under the carpet.

"This has caused great embarrassment. We are talking about the national

team which is extremely embarrassing," he said. "We will not hide anything. We want to clear this up as soon as possible so we don't have any doubts hanging over our heads."

Rumours of match-fixing started to surface after Cyprus lost 3-1 to Bulgaria in Limassol this month, their first defeat in six home games.

According to some newspaper reports at least two players were involved in placing bets against Cyprus winning the Bulgaria game, which came after a 2-0 defeat of Israel.

It is alleged that players told friends and relatives to place the bets on their behalf. Apparently over 50,000 Cypriot pounds (\$105,000) in total bets at local bookies went on Bulgaria to be beating

Cyprus at half-time. Cyprus tailed 2-1 at half-time after equalising 15 minutes before the break.

Lefkariitis warned that if any player was found guilty of match-rigging, "these people will have to forget about football."

The Cyprus FA is now pushing for a ban on all betting involving local teams and the national side.

Lefkariitis said the move has the backing of politicians in the house of representatives and a motion to ban fixed odds betting on local games has been tabled.

"We need to exclude betting on the championship and international team if we are to dispel such rumours," he said. "We hope deputies are sensitive enough to make it a top priority."

## 1996 ATHLETICS SCENE:

### Lewis extends his reign at the top

PARIS (AFP) — Carl Lewis, who says he will bow out next year, extended his career at the top of men's athletics into a 15th year at the Atlanta Olympic Games when he became only the fourth competitor to win nine Olympic gold medals.

His fourth successive long jump title at the age of 35 allowed the 1983 world champion to match the feats of Finnish athlete Paavo Nurmi, who competed in 1920-28, Russian gymnast Larissa Latynina, 1956-64, and American swimmer Mark Spitz, 1968-72.

Michael Johnson broke the 200m world record as well as winning the 400m in a performance of brute strength.

World champion Donovan Bailey, 28, redeemed Canada's name eight years after Ben Johnson's Seoul shame by winning the 100m in a world record 9.84sec, the first time this record had been broken at the Olympics since 1968.

However, 36-year-old defending champion Linford Christie of Britain captured just as much attention by getting himself disqualified for two false starts.

Gail Devers of the United States retained her women's 100m title at 29, winning her third major title by a photo-finish.

She also triumphed at Barcelona in 1992 and at the 1993 World Championships in Stuttgart by one hundredth of a second.

Merlene Ottey lost out in Stuttgart and again in Atlanta, where she was also beaten by Marie-Jose Perec in the 200m as the Frenchwoman completed a 200m-400m double.

However, the 36-year-old Jamaican was the fastest woman over 100m this year and will be competing again in next year's World Championships in Athens.

Atlanta promised a sprinters' games and the 1996 Olympics duly lived up to its pledge.

Johnson deserves pride of place just ahead of Bailey, Perec and Russian middle-distance victor Svetlana Masterkova.

The Texan's electrifying run over 200m, smashing his own one-month-old world mark by an enormous 0.34sec as he timed 19.32, proved historic. His second 100m, timed at 9.20sec, catapulted him past Namibian Frankie Fredericks and Trinidad's Ato Boldon.

Fredericks, a double silver medalist in Barcelona, and

Boldon can count themselves unlucky. It took world records to beat them in both their events.

Bailey's 9.84sec was more dramatic than the 200m final because Christie delayed the race for several minutes as he argued with officials following his disqualification.

To complete his misery, he was later knocked out of the 200m heats and then failed to get a run in the relay after his understudies bungled their opening heat.

Atlanta will be remembered for the string of world-class stars who flopped.

Sonia O'Sullivan of Ireland was the biggest casualty. The 5,000m world champion also looked a sure bet for the 1,500m but ill health saw her fail in both.

Maria Mutola of Mozambique, virtually unbeatable over 800m, was also hoping to challenge for the 1,500m. Her defeat to Masterkova over the shorter distance, however, persuaded her to pack her bags immediately.

Hassiba Boulmerka of Algeria, the Barcelona champion, was spiked in the semi-finals and Masterkova ran away with her second gold, to become the first woman since Soviet Tatyana Kazankina in 1976 to take both distances.

In the men's events, the major casualties fell to injury.

Javier Sotomayor, the high jump world record holder, could only clear one height in the final before tramping off. Sergey Bubka, the five-times pole vault world champion who had no-heighted at Barcelona, this time failed to start, with an Achilles tendon injury.

Mike Powell, the 1991 and 1993 world long jump champion and world record holder, was left weeping uncontrollably, face down in the pit after his abortive challenge.

For every broken-hearted loser there was a smiling winner, and world record holder Jonathan Edwards of Britain provided one of the best displays of sportsmanship as he encouraged eventual winner Kenny Harrison, Dever's boyfriend, during the triple jump competition.

Chioma Ajunwa, who had played in Nigeria's Women's World Cup soccer team in 1991, became the first African woman to win an Olympic field event. Her surprise win in the long jump brought a happy end to a four-year suspension for using drugs.

Ghada Shouaa of Syria became the first Arab woman to triumph in a field event, winning the seven-event heptathlon as defending champion Jackie Joyner-Kersey finally gave way to a hamstring injury.

China's Wang Junxia, a deadpan winner in the 1993 World Championships, returned as an exuberant competitor, winning the 5,000m and losing an epic confrontation with Portugal's Fernanda Ribeiro in the 10,000m.

World 1,500m champion Noureddine Morceli of Algeria made amends for his Barcelona flop while Norway's Vegar Rodal and Burkina Faso's Venuste Niyongabo took their chances in the absence of two Kenyans.

Wilson Kipketer, who won the 800m for Denmark at the 1995 World Championships, failed to satisfy the Kenyan authorities he was a Dane and excluded from the games.

He later went on to miss Seb Coe's 1981 world record by one tenth of a second.

Daniel Komen failed to make the grade at the Kenyan trials but later broke the two mile and 3,000m world records. He also led home five men in under 13 minutes in a scintillating 5,000m in Zurich where he failed by seven tenths of a second to break Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie's world mark.

Niyongabo won the Atlanta 5,000m while Gebrselassie won his other world record distance of 10,000m.

Kenyans dominated the steeplechase again and they could make an impact in five events in Athens next year as they had at least five runners in the top 10 of the 800m, 1,500m, 5,000m, 10,000m and steeplechase.

However, there were signs that African runners could be beaten.

Giacomo Leone upset a powerful African contingent to win the New York City Marathon in November and fellow Italian Stefano Baldini beat the Kenyans and Ethiopians in the world half-marathon championship in Majorca in September.

And Michael Johnson may have a challenge on his hands from Nigerian Francis Obikwelu, a 17-year-old who completed a sprint double at the World Junior Championships in Sydney.

## Doping suspicions create waves

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — The demise of China and the rise of Michelle Smith — swimming in 1996 could not escape the murky waters of doping suspicions.

Smith became the first Irish woman to win an Olympic gold medal, capturing three individual

golds and a bronze and shrugging off the cloud of controversy that surrounded her.

Smith won the 400m freestyle and both the 200m and 400m individual medley. Her late entry in the 400m free sparked a U.S. protest,

but that was nothing to the unsubstantiated doping rumours she was forced to respond to over and over as her victories multiplied.

Smith suffered from guilt by association. Her husband and coach Erik de Bruin, a Dutch discus thrower, was banned for steroid use in 1993.

All of Smith's dope tests were negative, and when U.S. coaches and swimmers suggested her progress over the past two years was too spectacular to be true, she was not slow to chastise her critics.

"Every time I'm tested, it's always negative," she said. "I'm tested again and again. For every one time a person on the U.S. team is tested, I'm tested five times."

Finally asked point blank, Smith said: "I have never used performance enhancing drugs."

The rapid demise of China's women, from 12 of 16 gold medals at the 1994 world championships to just one Olympic gold, was seized on as proof that tighter doping controls were working.

Chinese women won just six medals overall, led by Le Jingyi's 100m freestyle gold. Only nine of their 24 swimmers even made the finals.

U.S. women won the same number of medals as in Barcelona, 14, but after gloomy predictions it was a triumph.

Amy Van Dyken was an unlikely U.S. heroine, winning the 50m free, 100m butterfly and two relay golds after a lifelong battle with asthma.

Hungary's Krisztina Egerszegi won the women's 200m backstroke for the third games in a row, joining Australian Dawn Fraser as the only swimmers to win the same event three straight times.

Russian freestyle great Alexander Popov became the first man since Johnny Weissmuller in 1924-28 to repeat as 100m free champion, and also claimed a second straight 50m freestyle victory.

Popov, who has a training base in Australia, had not had long to savour his success when he was stabbed in a street fight in Moscow in August. He was hospitalised for two weeks but doctors predicted he would make a complete recovery.

American distance great Janet Evans failed in her bid for a fifth individual gold, finishing sixth in the 800m freestyle and missing the final altogether in the 400m

free.

Three individual world records fell in the seven days of swimming. Belgian Fred Deburghgrave set a world record of 1min 0.60sec in the 100m breaststroke heats, though he couldn't swim that fast in winning the gold.

South African Penelope Heyns, who won both breaststroke events, also got her world record of 1:07.02 in the morning and her gold medal at night in the women's 100m, while Russian Denis Pankratov improved his 100m butterfly world record to 52.27.

Several other world record holders, including Australian Kieren Perkins in the 1500m free, Americans Tom Dolan in the 400m medley and Jeff Rouse in the 100m backstroke and China's Le in the 100m free, won with times outside their best.

Australian swimmers in particular were frustrated by their failure to produce their best times, times that should have given them their best Olympics in decades.

U.S. women's head coach Richard Quick summed up their disappointment for them.

"Times," Quick said, "are very secondary to winning in the Olympic games."

### PEACE CORPS JORDAN

#### ARABIC LANGUAGE COORDINATOR

The U.S. Peace Corps in Jordan is seeking suitably qualified candidates for a contractual position of Arabic Language Coordinator.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develops Arabic language training materials and training courses for adult foreigners.
- Assists in the recruitment of local Arabic teachers (9) and supervises their teaching.
- In conjunction with organization staff, develops an intensive 12 week introductory Arabic language and cultural training program as well as more advanced materials for supplementary study.
- Evaluates and assesses the learners and teachers in addition to the entire Arabic language training effort.

#### Required:

- Degree in language education and a strong interest in curriculum development.
- A minimum of three years of language teaching experience (any language) using communicative methods.
- Comprehensive skills in and knowledge of written and spoken Arabic.
- Supervisory teaching experience preferred.
- Willingness to work for extended periods outside Amman (e.g. Irbid, Karak).
- Fluency in English.

This is a mid-level technical staff position of a long term contractual nature. Interested candidates should submit a curriculum vitae and cover letter no later than January 6, 1997 to:

Language Coordinator, Attn: Jan Karpowicz, PO Box 354, Amman 11118

or by fax to: 665-099 (Amman)

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Richard Gere...in

PRIMAL FEAR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PHILADELPHIA "2"

The Jungle Book

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238

PLAZA

\* The Hunchback of Notre Dame

Shows: 10:30, 12:00, 1:30, 5:00

\* RANSOM

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:45, 11:00

CINEMA TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

Sharon Stone & Izabelle Adjani...in

DIABOLIQUE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

CONCORD "2"

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Amman Theatre & Cinema

TEL: 618274 - 618275

Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled

Five-Star Government

Starring comedians:

Mahmoud Saimah

& Hussein Tubishat

Play starts 8:30 p.m.

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

TEL: 625155

The theatre is closed from Dec. 15, 1996 until the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan in order to prepare for a new play entitled "Al Aman Ya Ho"





**SWEDEN'S PERNILLA WIBERG IN ACTION:** Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg passes a pole during the Woman's World Cup Slalom in Semmering, Austria, Saturday. Wiberg won the competition clocking a combined time for two legs of 1:42.76 (Reuters photo)

## Newcastle roar back as Arsenal held

LONDON (AFP) — Newcastle United returned to form with a bang Saturday as they reignited their faltering title bid by thrashing Tottenham Hotspur 7-1 at St. James' Park to end a seven game win-less streak.

Kevin Keegan's troops stopped the rot in style, to end the worst run of his five-year stewardship and send Spurs home with their tails between their legs as they cantered to victory with two goals apiece from Les Ferdinand, Alan Shearer and Rob Lee and one from Philippe Albert.

Allan Nielsen scored a consolation for the visitors at the death.

Spurs' North London rivals Arsenal were meanwhile frustrated in their attempt to go top of the Premiership as Aston Villa twice came from behind to snatch a 2-2 draw at Highbury.

Ian Wright hit his 22nd goal of the season and 199th in league football to give Arsenal the lead after fine work by Frenchman Patrick Vieira and Dennis Bergkamp.

Wright, signing off before a three-match suspension following his dismissal at Nottingham Forest last week, could have brought up the double tonne just before the break when he rounded Villa's Mark Bosnich. But he was denied by a Ricardo Scimica goal-line clearance.

After the break, Steve Bould had to clear off the line for the hosts before Ian Taylor

could turn the ball in after Dwight Yorke had caused havoc in the Gunners' defence.

But Villa would not be denied, and Savo Milosevic blasted home the equaliser after Yorke won a high ball in the area.

In a thrilling finale, Paul Merson put the Gunners back in front with a rasping drive, only for Yorke to head down the other end and slam home a left-foot strike to give the visitors a deserved point. That left Arsenal two points behind Liverpool and without a win in four games.

At Old Trafford, an early Eric Cantona penalty awarded for a Gary Kelly foul on Ryan Giggs gave champions Manchester United the points in a 1-0 win over struggling Leeds United.

United's win took them into second place above Arsenal on goal average.

Wimbledon, whose form this season has been a revelation, meanwhile bounced back from their 5-0 slaughter at the hands of Aston Villa which ended a 19-match unbeaten streak, to win 3-1 at Everton and hold onto fourth spot.

Graham Stuart opened the scoring for Everton on 23 minutes, but the Dons turned the game completely on its head in the second period with goals from Efan Ekoku, Oyvind Leonhardsen and Marcus Gayle.

But the performance of the

day was unquestionably at St. James' Park, where Newcastle eased the mounting pressure on their manager's shoulders.

Shearer, leading the line superbly, blasted his 14th goal of the season and Ferdinand hit his 12th before Spurs could draw breath after Keith Gillespie's mazy run down the left effectively ending the contest.

In the second half, the Geordies ran riot and Ferdinand stroked home the third from close range after good work by Peter Beardsley and John Beresford. Rob Lee then struck twice — one a fine solo effort — either side of Albert's majestic strike.

Elsewhere in the Premiership, Gianfranco Zola blasted his fourth goal in three games for Chelsea as Ruud Geurts' men took an early lead over midtable Sheffield Wednesday. And the Italian then combined with compatriot Dominic di Matteo before supplying an inch-perfect cross for Mark Hughes to head number two.

But Mark Pembroke responded almost immediately with a 30-yard left-foot volley to pull one back for the visitors.

Dejan Stefanovic hit a last-gasp equaliser to preserve Wednesday's 1-1 game unbeaten run.

Leicester and Nottingham Forest drew 2-2 at Filbert Street, the hosts taking a 10th

minute lead through promising youngster Emile Heskey's sixth goal of the season. Nigel Clough slammed home the equaliser in the 37th minute after Kevin Campbell headed on.

After the break, Muzzy Izzet hit Leicester's second after a through pass from Heskey. Colin Cooper rescued a point.

Coventry hammered Middlesbrough 3-0 after the game was delayed for 15 minutes because of crowd congestion at Highfield Road. City went in front in the 29th minute, when Darren Huckerby headed in from close range following a pinpoint centre from John Salako.

It was Huckerby's third goal for Coventry since his move from Newcastle a month ago.

McAllister made the game safe with a late penalty for handball to give his side their fourth straight victory.

Craig Liddle put through his own net five minutes from time to complete Boro's misery.

West Ham, without a win since Oct. 26, saw off Sunderland 2-0 courtesy of a Slaven Bilic header and a brilliant individual effort by Romanian Florin Raduciu.

Finally, Derby and Blackburn fought out a goalless draw at the baseball ground. Leaders Liverpool were to face Southampton at the Dell in Sunday's game.

## Baggio falls foul of swindle, newspapers say

ROME (R) — Italian striker Roberto Baggio has lost up to six billion lire (\$4.0 million) in an alleged investment swindle, Italian newspapers reported on Friday.

The former Italian international was one of at least 200 people who placed money in a finance company based in the Adriatic resort of Rimini, which promised enormous returns on foreign investments in tax havens, the papers said.

But the money has vanished

and 16 people from a finance firm in Rimini were arrested just before Christmas.

"There is not much to say about this. It's all in the hands of my lawyers," Baggio, who plays with Italian champions AC Milan, was quoted as saying in La Repubblica newspaper. Papers said magistrates in Rimini were investigating a firm which promised to place client funds in a bank based in the West Indies. Some of this money was used to buy shares

in a Peruvian marble quarry.

"There would now seem to be no trace of the billions of lire invested," La Stampa newspaper said.

Judicial sources were quoted as saying that other Italian soccer players had put money into the fund but said Baggio was the single biggest investor, with between three and six billion lire entrusted to the firm.

Corriere Della Sera said the finance police were considering opening their own

inquiries to see if investors had paid taxes on the funds.

News of the swindle came at a bad time for Baggio. Nicknamed "the divine ponytail" by his fans, Baggio has spent much of the season on the bench at AC Milan and has quarrelled with the club's new manager — Arrigo Sacchi, the former national coach who moved to Milan four weeks ago. Speculation has been rife that the 29-year-old Baggio was looking for a transfer.

### GOVERN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAINAN HIRSH

#### WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

1.1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKQ83 773 0A37 4785:

The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 2 3 4  
Pass 1 2 3 4  
What action do you take?

1.2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
AK76 052 073 4A3  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 2 3 4  
Pass 1 2 3 4  
What do you bid now?

1.3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
AKQKQ 106 0AKQJ 497  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH WEST SOUTH EAST  
1 2 3 4  
What action do you take?

1.4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
AK84 0952 0Q83 4653  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 2 3 4  
Pass 1 2 3 4  
What action do you take?

1.5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
AK9 010543 0A10 4A8  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH WEST SOUTH EAST  
1 2 3 4  
Pass 1 2 3 4  
What action do you take?

1.6 - Your wealth of first- and second-round controls and ruffing value in spades make your hand well suited to slam. The only question is a potential fatal weakness in hearts. To focus partner's attention on the trump suit, make a slam try by leading to five hearts.

1.7 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
AK8 0AKQJ5 06 4J876  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH WEST SOUTH EAST  
1 2 3 4  
Pass 1 2 3 4  
What action do you take?

1.8 - It is a close decision a game of three clubs on a jump to four hearts. West's diamond overall makes it likely that partner does not have values in diamonds, so it would go for broke with four hearts.

## Croatia, Switzerland equal favourites for Hopman Cup

PERTH, Australia (AFP) — Title-holder Croatia and last year's runner-up, Switzerland, are equal favourites for the 800,000 dollar (U.S.\$640,000) Hopman Cup mixed teams tennis tournament starting here Sunday.

Explosive left-hander Goran Ivanisevic and world number seven Iva Majoli will carry the Croatian banner again, while Olympic gold medalist Marc Rosset and teenage star Martina Hingis are back for Switzerland.

Bookmakers have installed Croatia, seeded number one by organisers, and the Swiss pair, seeded number two, as 6-4 co-favourites.

The Croatian pair will have their first match in the eight-nation, seven-day event at Burswood Dome Sunday when they clash with Australia's Mark Philippoussis and Nicole Bradtke, who are unseeded.

Switzerland must wait until Monday before they

open their campaign with a tie against Romania, rank outsiders making their first appearance in the nine-year-old tournament.

Bookmakers have Romania's Adrian Panait and Irina Spirlea at 100-1. Rosset and Hingis are kept to clinch the \$220,000 first prize after a Rosset tantrum cost the pair the final last year.

In the decisive mixed doubles, after the singles had been shared, the Swiss pair were poised for triumph when Rosset punched a plywood board after unsuccessfully questioning a line call. He was forced to retire in agony.

France, represented by Guy Forget and the 1995 Australian Open champion, Mary Pierce, are on the second line of betting at 5-1. Organisers have them seeded number three.

Forget and Pierce open their programme late Sunday when they meet the United States pair, Justin Gimelstob and Chanda Rubin.

Gimelstob is a last-

minute substitute for Richey Reneberg, who has told organisers his wife, expecting a child, is two weeks overdue and he needs to be with her.

Germany has drifted from 7-2 to 25-1 in the wake of the withdrawal of world number one Steffi Graf, suffering with a virus.

Germany will now be represented by Bernd Karbacher and Petra Begerow, ranked 67 in the world.

The eight teams are:  
Group A: Croatia (Goran Ivanisevic, Iva Majoli), France (Guy Forget, Mary Pierce), United States (Justin Gimelstob, Chanda Rubin), Australia (Mark Philippoussis, Nicole Bradtke).

Group B: Switzerland (Marc Rosset, Martina Hingis), Romania (Adrian Panait, Irina Spirlea), South Africa (Wayne Ferreira, Amanda Coetzer), Germany (Bernd Karbacher, Petra Begerow).



### JORDAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

#### KING ABDULLAH HOSPITAL PROJECT VACANCY FOR THE POST OF "ENGINEER"

The Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) is now constructing the King Abdullah Hospital Project (KAHP). This hospital complex consists of a tower block (which has 14 floors and one basement) and horizontal low-rise buildings. The overall area of the project is about 100,000 square metres, and it can accommodate about 650 beds. The total cost for construction is around 70 million U.S. dollars (excluding the fixed medical equipment). The contractor is working on site with a consultant performing the supervision. JUST invites applications for a qualified engineer to lead and manage an engineering team to perform the duties of the "Engineer." The applicant should possess the following qualifications and experiences:

- (1) University degree preferably in civil engineering.
- (2) A minimum of 25 years experience after the Bachelor's degree. Less experience (e.g. 20 years) might be accepted if the candidate has a postgraduate degree (MSc or Ph.D.).
- (3) Good experience in construction of large medical facilities.
- (4) Previous experience in design and supervision.
- (5) Good knowledge of scheduling, monitoring, and procurement, experience in reading and evaluating CPM/PERT, or a similar schedule.
- (6) Corporate management abilities for construction projects.
- (7) English language proficiency (reading, writing and communication).

This position is expected to commence immediately on a yearly contract. Qualified candidates are invited to send their CVs detailing all relevant experiences, certificates and other documents, together with the names, telephones, fax numbers, and addresses of three references to the following address:

President, Jordan University of Science & Technology  
P.O. Box 3030 - Irbid - Jordan  
Fax (962-2) 295148

Applications should arrive at JUST no later than 15 January 1997. Please note that all applications will be dealt with in strict confidence.

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## Hebron University opens after 10 months of military closure

HEBRON (Agencies) — Hebron's Islamic University reopened Saturday, 10 months after the campus was ordered closed by the Israeli army on suspicion it was a stronghold of Palestinian militants.

The opening of the university came as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators reported progress in talks on an Israeli army pullback from four-fifths of Hebron, the only West Bank town still under Israeli occupation.

Both sides have said they expected an agreement to be signed next week, and redeployment to be completed by Jan. 5.

Hundreds of students milled in the courtyard of the Islamic University on Saturday, after word spread that Israel had lifted the closure. In recent weeks, students at repeatedly protested outside the locked gates to demand that studies be allowed to resume.

"Despite all the pain, this is a good step in the peace process, especially in a city that has suffered as much as Hebron," said university spokesman Nabil Abu Zneid.

"You cannot have peace

while you are closing universities,"

Business student Mohammad Haimoni said he was pleased. "We will be even happier when the occupation leaves Hebron," he said.

The Islamic University, along with several other West Bank colleges, was ordered closed by the Israeli army in March in the wake of four suicide bombings by militants in Israel. The blasts killed 63 people and sent the peace process into turmoil.

Mr. Abu Zneid said studies continued in makeshift classrooms, but were hampered by the lack of laboratories and libraries. Abu Zneid noted that no Islamic university students were arrested in connection with the bombings.

The Islamic University, with an enrollment of 1,600, was initially ordered closed for six months, but the closure was extended until March 1997. Following the recent protests outside the campus gates, university officials and army officials held talks on opening the campus ahead of time.

"The opening of the university was made possible

after the institute's management committed itself to keeping law and order there," the Israeli army said in a statement.

The 2,700 student university, has been the scene of almost daily protests over the past two weeks by Hebron youths demanding its reopening.

Israeli security officials had expressed fears of violent demonstrations Saturday by students who claimed Israel had reneged on an earlier pledge to reopen the university.

On Monday more than 1,000 Palestinian students marched through Hebron to demand the immediate reopening of the city's university, and the week before hundreds of students broke into the Hebron university campus.

A tense standoff with Israeli soldiers only ended after the Palestinians said they had received a promise that the university and a polytechnic institute would be reopened.

Army officials subsequently denied making any promises, but Israel later announced that classes were being allowed to resume in two polytechnic buildings.



Female students chat and stroll around the reopened campus of Hebron's Islamic University on Saturday (Reuters photo)

## Bahraini emir pardons 2 Qataris on eve of mediation meeting in Cairo

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahrain's emir on Saturday issued a decree pardoning a Qatari man and woman, four days after a state security court found them guilty of spying for Qatar and sentenced them to three years in jail.

The pardon came on the day when four other countries in the Gulf were meeting in Cairo to discuss means to settle a territorial dispute between Bahrain and Qatar.

"Bahrain's Emir Sheikh Isa bin Sulman Al Khalifa issued a decree pardoning the two Qatari citizens," Cabinet and Information Minister Mohammad Ibrahim Al Mutawae said.

Bahrain's state security court on Wednesday found Fahad Hamad Abdullah Al Bakker and Salwa Jassim Mohammed Fakhr al Guili guilty of spying and sentenced them to three years in prison and fined them 1,000 dinars (\$2,652) each.

"The emiri decree includes dropping all their penalties and releasing them," Mr. Mutawae said in a statement sent to Reuters.

Mr. Mutawae said the par-

don followed a written appeal by the two Qataris to Sheikh Isa in which they "regretted their acts against Bahrain and sought clemency."

He said the pardon was part of Sheikh Isa's initiatives to maintain a good relationship between the people of Bahrain and Qatar.

The two were charged with gathering intelligence for the Qatari government to undermine Bahrain's security.

Qatar denounced the court's verdict and demanded immediate release of the two Qataris.

"Qatar regrets and denounces the ruling passed, following closed door and secretive consultations by the state security court," a Qatari Interior Ministry official said on Wednesday.

Qatar has also accused Bahrain of torturing Mr. Bakker and said the trial "sets a dangerous precedent in Gulf's ties."

Bahrain denied the charge.

A four-country committee entrusted with solving a

territorial dispute between Oman and Bahrain was to meet in Cairo Saturday on the sidelines of a meeting of foreign ministers from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), along with Syria and Egypt.

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal made the announcement as he arrived in Cairo to attend the meeting of the eight-member group dubbed the Damascus Declaration.

"The four-member committee which was formed to solving the border issue between Qatar and Bahrain will meet today," the Saudi official said at Cairo airport.

The Damascus Declaration meeting will be important because it will adopt a Declaration concerning Arab cooperation which was prepared by a committee of experts yesterday (Friday), he added.

Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa also described the meeting as important and said it came at a time when the countries in the Damascus declaration group should solve a num-

ber of issues.

"We will examine a number of political, security and economic issues," he told reporters at Cairo airport.

Asked to comment on the meeting of the mediation committee between Bahrain and Oman, he said: "We are always with agreement and harmony."

Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf Ben Alawi said the Cairo meeting was being held in a climate marked by "a will to achieve the interests of the Arab Nation."

He stressed that the priority in this "sensitive phase" was "to use all means to protect peace and achieve the declared Arab goals."

He did not elaborate.

Qatar has taken the long-standing dispute over Howar islands to the International Court of Justice in the Hague in 1991. The move has angered Bahrain, which prefers a regional solution.

The dispute prompted Bahrain to boycott the GCC summit which ended in the Qatari capital Doha on Dec. 9.

## Weizman describes Israel's early deserters as 'SoBs'

NEW DELHI (R) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman said in a television interview that patriotism was undimmed among Israel's youth but even when the country was establishing itself there were "SoBs" — sons of bitches — who deserted it.

In the interview shown by India's state-run Doordarshan television on Saturday, the eve of a visit Mr. Weizman is making to India, he said the present generation of Israelis was no less patriotic than the one which fought to set up a Jewish homeland.

"We have no shortage whatsoever of our young people joining the defence services," Mr. Weizman said when asked if the latest generation of Jews had lost the patriotic fervour of earlier years. "Does that show lack of patriotism?" He said not every Jew

rallied to the Israeli cause during the Jewish state's formative years.

"But we have had our own breed — shall I tell you — of SoBs, who deserted us when we needed them most," said Mr. Weizman, a former commander-in-chief of the Israeli air force.

Asked to comment on a letter displayed in his office to the celebrated Jewish scientist Albert Einstein, inviting him to become Israel's president, Mr. Weizman said: "That was wrong. I feel it should always be a person who has lived or worked in Israel."

Mr. Weizman met Pakistan's then-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto at the inauguration ceremony of South African President Nelson Mandela.

"I was introduced to her. She didn't run away from

me. But when I asked her to visit Israel, she said it was too early. She is a charming lady."

Mr. Weizman said he had become a close friend of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who he described as a brave man for signing a historic peace treaty with Israel.

"I had known then, because Sadat had told me, that he was grooming (present Egyptian President) Hosni Mubarak to take over from him."

Mr. Weizman said he would visit an air base in the southern state of Karnataka where he was stationed as a pilot in the British air force 51 years ago.

India and Israel established diplomatic ties in January 1992 after traditionally pro-Arab India endorsed the Middle East peace process.

## Local group pledges to foil Israeli fair

AMMAN (AP) — A group opposed to normalised ties with Israel vowed Saturday to torpedo the first Israeli trade exhibition here, and threatened Jordanians who attend with blacklisting.

The three-day fair, set to open Jan. 6, is organised by a private Jordanian firm as part of the trade cooperation with Israel outlined in the 1994 peace treaty between the two countries. More than 80 Israeli companies are to display high-tech products, garments, jewellery and furniture.

Ahmad Obeidat, head of "National Jordanian Committee for cancelling the Israeli Trade Fair," said his group includes

Parliament members, political parties, trade unionists, women's groups and human rights organisations.

Mr. Obeidat, a former prime minister, said his group will create a blacklist of participants, including reporters who cover the event.

"The blacklist will be accessible to all Arab organisations to boycott all those who seek to normalise relations with Israel," Mr. Obeidat said.

He also said his group will form a "human chain" outside the fair to prevent people from entering. Mr. Obeidat called the event "a big threat to our economy."

"It will kill our national

industries and close the door in the face of cooperation with Arab markets," he said. "The fair is a political, economic and cultural invasion and we will not surrender to that."

Mr. Obeidat said his group has asked Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to cancel the event, but has not received a response.

Fakhr Nasser, an organiser of the exhibition, said the controversy has "attracted the attention of more Israeli firms to the event."

He said the fair, originally scheduled for Dec. 15, was delayed because Israeli firms asked for more time to sign up.

## Man held with over \$800,000 in forged banknotes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Police on Saturday seized counterfeit currency worth more than \$800,000 and arrested a man in possession of the forged bills, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

Petra quoted Nazih Shreideh, head of the Anti-Narcotics and Anti-Forgery Department, as saying that the man, who was identified only as an "Arab," was arrested when he tried to change \$805,200 in forged banknotes in southern Amman. No further details were given.

The amount involved is among the highest reported in counterfeit cases in Jordan in recent years.

## Amman murder attempt against businessmen under investigation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Authorities are investigating the attempted murder of a prominent businessman in Jabal Hussein on Wednesday, the criminal, prosecutor said Saturday.

Hanzeh Nazal, 46, was getting into his car, parked inside a building near Sukeinah Circle in Jabal Hussein where his office is located, when several bullets were fired at him by unidentified assailants, reports said.

"We are questioning several people in connection with the incident, but so far we have not arrested anyone," Criminal Court Prosecutor Abdul Aziz Rawashdeh said.

Mr. Nazal, who was hit several times in the chest and stomach, managed to crawl to the building's elevator, and take it up to the

street floor seeking help.

A traffic officer rushed Mr. Nazal to the Islamic Hospital.

Asked what could have been the motive behind the attempted murder, Mr. Rawashdeh said: "Nothing yet has been established."

But informed sources said the attempted murder might be linked to missing funds that belongs to the Damascus-based Democratic Front of the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) that were allegedly embezzled by an associate of Mr. Nazal.

"Most probably political and financial reasons could be behind the attack against Mr. Nazal, an informed source said.

Mr. Rawashdeh said Mr. Nazal was still listed in critical condition.

## Yemeni kidnappers of Dutch tourists kill 3 policemen with anti-tank rocket

SANAA (AFP) — Yemeni tribesmen holding four Dutch tourists hostage in the mountains east of here fired an anti-tank rocket at police officers surrounding them on Saturday, killing three policemen, witnesses said.

Five other policemen were injured and two all-terrain vehicles destroyed by the rocket fired by the kidnappers, members of the Beni Jabr tribe, they said.

Some 500 members of a special police unit have encircled the abductors in the mountains some 60 kilometres east of Sanaa, the Yemeni capital.

Five Beni Jabr tribesmen seized the four Dutch tourists and their Yemeni guide on Thursday while

they were driving to visit an archaeological site at Marib in the east of the country.

According to a tribal source in the region, the leaders of the Beni Jabr tribe have urged the commander of the police force to detain five members of the tribe and conduct peaceful negotiations for the release of the tourists.

The Dutch embassy here said Saturday that it could not release the identities of the hostages.

According to a police spokesman, the kidnappers are seeking to put pressure on the government to obtain financial compensation.

Kidnapping foreigners has become a common practice in Yemen by tribes

seeking government money to develop oil resources on their territory or for the construction of roads and other infrastructure.

They have also demanded the release of imprisoned members of their tribes.

Yemeni authorities foiled an attempt on Dec. 19 by armed tribesmen in the north to kidnap five Dutch tourists, according to the official SABA news agency. The tribesmen were arrested.

In January, 17 French tourists were kidnapped and held hostage by tribesmen in Yemen for four days before they were freed. A French diplomat was seized in October in the Marib region and released unharmed 10 days later.

## COLUMN

Charles under fire

LONDON (AFP) — The British Tabloid press slammed Prince Charles for "irresponsibility" after a paparazzi photographer snapped the royal playing with his son Harry, who was holding a loaded shotgun at the time. Several daily tabloids published the photo of the laughing Charles, trying to catch 12-year-old Harry around the neck during the traditional royal hunting party at Sandringham, where the royal family usually celebrates Christmas. "Are you mad?" screamed the front page of the Daily Mirror. Interviewed by the papers, the league against cruel sports, opposed to blood sports, branded the prince's behaviour as "totally irresponsible."

## Redford wants mellow movies

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. actor Robert Redford, who once raised hell and ate lead as an outlaw in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," says some movies featured at his Sundance Film Festival pack too much violence. "I'd gone to the theatre one night during the '95 festival to see a few films — including 'Shallow Grave' and 'The Basketball Diaries' — and I could barely eat for 24 hours because they were so loaded with violence," Redford told interview magazine. Redford said he wants next month's Sundance Festival to showcase "edgier, more experimental, riskier films."

## Jackson wants proof of baby

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Michael Jackson reportedly wants to be certain — certain beyond a shadow of a doubt — that his pregnant wife is carrying his baby. According to a British newspaper, the U.S. superstar singer has ordered DNA tests before signing a lucrative contract with his spouse Debbie Rowe. The Daily Mirror said Rowe will earn \$1.25 million when the baby is born, and \$280,000 a year as long as the marriage holds up.

## Clinton tops list of admired

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton, not surprisingly, topped a Gallup poll list of the most admired people. "Usually the sitting president wins because he's the most well-known person people can think of off the top of their heads," said Gallup Managing Editor David Moore. Following Clinton among the top 10 men: Pope John Paul II, retired general Colin Powell, the reverend Billy Graham, former Senator Bob Dole, former Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter (tie), Nelson Mandela, former President George Bush, basketball star Michael Jordan and retired general Norman Schwarzkopf. Heading the list of most admired women for the third time was mother Teresa. The second most admired, also for a third time, was Hillary Clinton, followed by Barbara Bush, talk show host Oprah Winfrey and Elizabeth Dole (tie), Margaret Thatcher, Princess Diana, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Nancy Reagan, Barbara Streisand and Queen Elizabeth.